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STAR WARS[®]

INSIDER

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THE FORCE AWAKENS
TRAILER
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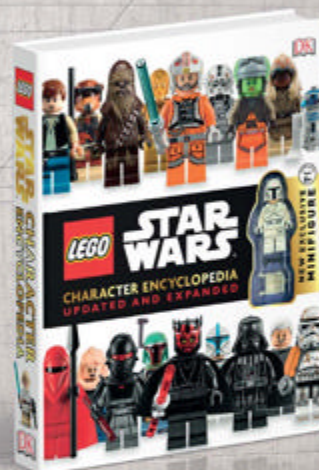
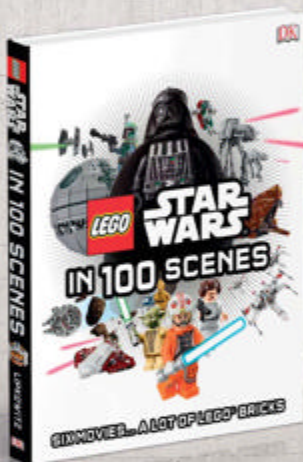




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"Chewie, we're home"—Han Solo, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, 2015

I'm writing this editorial shortly after landing from a 10-hour flight home to London from *Star Wars* Celebration in Anaheim, California. I'll be honest: I'm giddy with excitement for all sorts of reasons. Firstly, there was the electrifying welcome to the show featuring JJ Abrams, Kathleen Kennedy and the cast of *The Force Awakens*. Then there was the new teaser that sent shockwaves through the convention center—and then the world!

I also had the chance to meet up with contributors. The sad part of working in the magazine business today is that, with contributors all around the world, I rarely see or even meet overseas colleagues face-to-face. Celebration is our only chance, so I always make the most of connecting with the talented team who do all the hard work in helping create this magazine. Of course, some of our contributors were very busy signing at the show—see you next time, Vanessa Marshall!

Most importantly, however, the convention afforded me the chance to meet you, the readers. Whether it was at the *Insider* panel or at our booth, I was overwhelmed by the incredibly kind words and appreciation that you guys offered. Even the criticisms were constructive and well put. And yes, don't worry—*The Force Awakens* coverage is coming, I can promise you!

Next year, Celebration hits London—my hometown! I can't wait to see you all again...

May the Force be with you... Always.

Jonathan Wilkins, Editor

STAR WARS

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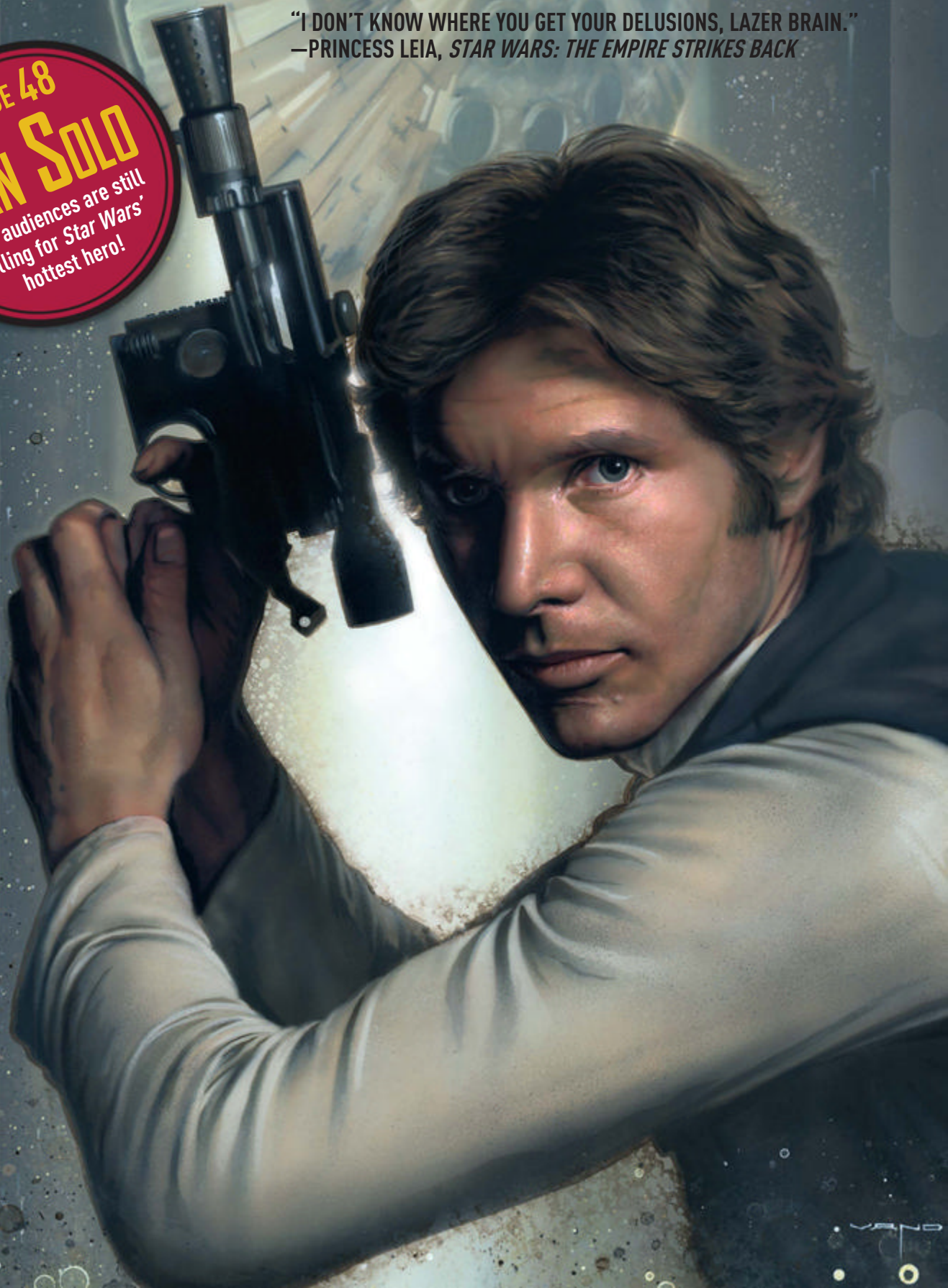
THIS ISSUE....

"I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GET YOUR DELUSIONS, LAZER BRAIN."
—PRINCESS LEIA, *STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*

PAGE 48

HAN SOLD

Why audiences are still
falling for Star Wars'
hottest hero!



Subscribe today and get an exclusive subscriber cover with every issue—not available in stores! Plus, in this month's issue, get a free action figure and save up to 30% off the usual price.

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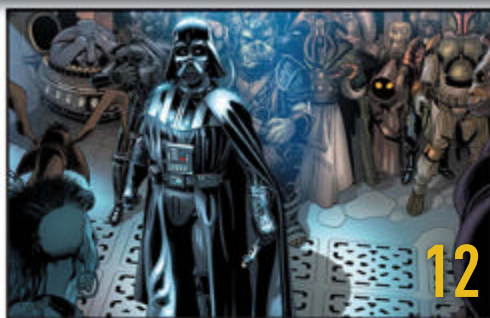
Star Wars' most suave charmer takes to the sabacc table!

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The second part of an indepth look at the comic book classic.

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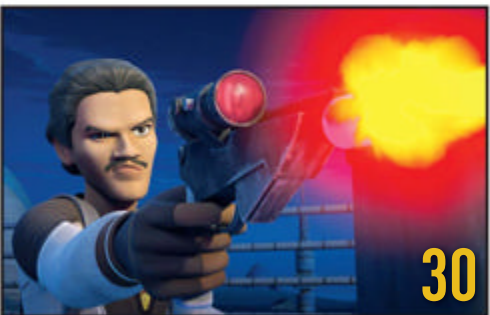
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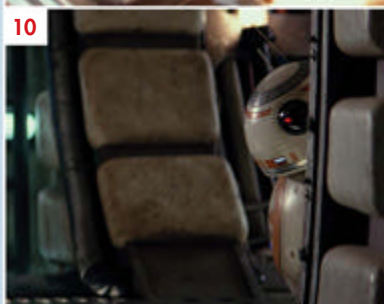
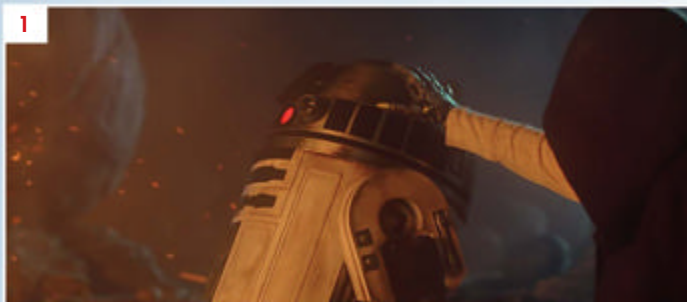
The fans who have met the stars of *Star Wars* share their experiences!

74 BANTHA TRACKS

Insider celebrates the saga's most dedicated fans!

LAUNCH PAD

ALL THE COOL NEWS FROM THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE



THE FORCE COMES HOME!

THE FORCE AWAKEN TEASER #2 UNVEILED!

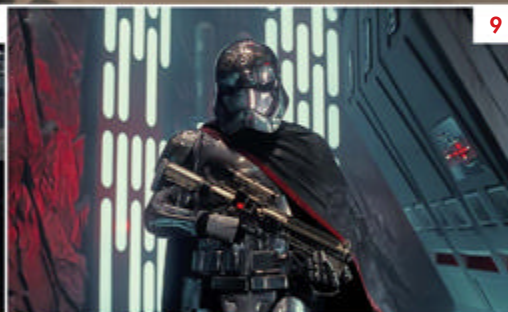
The second teaser made its debut at *Star Wars* Celebration Anaheim, introducing the world to the planet Jakku and a shiny Captain Phasma, while bringing back icons Han Solo and Chewbacca!



3



8



9



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1. A touch of love or a touch of evil? We think we know whose mechanical hand that is... but is there a surprise in store?

2. It's Luke's original lightsaber, but who is passing it to whom?

3. Action stations! The emerging characters of Rey, Finn, and BB-8 run—and roll!—for their lives. With that weapon, Rey certainly looks like she can take care of herself... though perhaps not against an First Order TIE fighter attack.

4. The Force is strong in this one? Evil villain Kylo Ren leaves destruction in his wake.

5. The First Order gathers under a sinister red banner, along with some heavy artillery. But who is the mystery figure dressed in black overseeing things, and is that the dangerous Captain Phasma next to him?

6. The First Order look impressive, but they're not impervious to attack. This hangar bay is under some heavy fire. We just hope that guy bearing the brunt of the blast has insurance...

7. A moral dilemma? He's removed a bloodied helmet and looks more than a little disturbed. Once a stormtrooper, always a stormtrooper?

8. We know they are bad-guy ships, but those First Order Star Destroyers sure are a beautiful sight.

9. It's Captain Phasma, a very exceptional captain indeed. A member of the First Order, she really looks like someone you don't want to run afoul of...

10. It's BB-8 on the *Millennium Falcon*, but why is our new favorite droid hiding?

11. Our first close-up look at Rey, the heroine of the *Star Wars* galaxy. It doesn't seem like she ever takes a break from the action, kind of like a certain Princess we know and love...

12. A helping hand? Is this Rey and Finn's first meet? It seems like he's survived one or two explosions. But because his other outfit is shiny, white armor, should Rey really be this trusting?

13. The *Millennium Falcon*—back in action! But who is at the helm during this battle on Jakku?

14. The trailer had us breathless over the visual effects, but none so much as this—a wrecked Super Star Destroyer plays home to a skirmish between the *Millennium Falcon* and a pursuing TIE fighter!

15. The line that every *Star Wars* fan has repeated a million times: "Chewie, we're home!"

NEWSFLASH!

STAR WARS REBELS SEASON TWO ARRIVES JUNE 21

Captain Rex and Hondo Ohnaka to return! More next issue!

STAR WARS ANTHOLOGY: *ROGUE ONE* COMING DECEMBER 2016

Rebels and the Death Star to feature!



Photo by Ram Bergman

PHOTO STORY!
Star Wars: Episode VIII's writer/director Rian Johnson catches up on some reading earlier this year while at an airport, somewhere in Europe!

GAME ON!

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT ARRIVES NOVEMBER 17

Battle of Jakku downloadable level available on December 8!

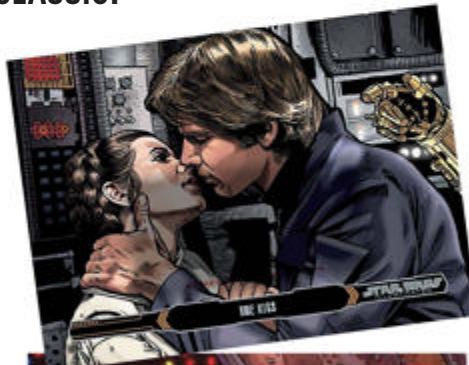
DISNEY INFINITY 3.0 TO FEATURE *STAR WARS*

Prepare for a Fall debut for this hotly anticipated game!

TOPPS STRIKES BACK!

TOPPS *STAR WARS* ILLUSTRATED: *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* OFFERS A NEW LOOK AT AN OLD CLASSIC!

Breath-taking all-new artwork depicts *The Empire Strikes Back* from new vantage points and reveals new depth. This set visualizes the 1983 radio drama for the first time, adding backstory and expanding scenes. The 100 base cards feature original artwork from top-tier artists. Inserts include Movie Poster Re-interpretations, One Year Earlier, and The Mission: Capture Skywalker. Hits include sketch cards, panoramic sketch cards, sketchographs featuring original sketches paired with actor autographs, film cells from *The Empire Strikes Back* and printing plates.



MORE TO SAY

Like Topps *Star Wars* cards at
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HAVE YOU?

WIN!

Insider has five hobby boxes to send out to five lucky readers! Please write into the address on page three by July 30 with the subject line, "I'M STRIKING BACK!"



TOPPS ON THE MOVE!

TOPPS CARD TRADER PRODUCER IAN HUNDIAK AND ART DIRECTOR NEIL KLEID TALK ABOUT THE TRADING CARD APP THAT'S GOT FANS FROM AROUND THE WORLD COLLECTING DIGITALLY!

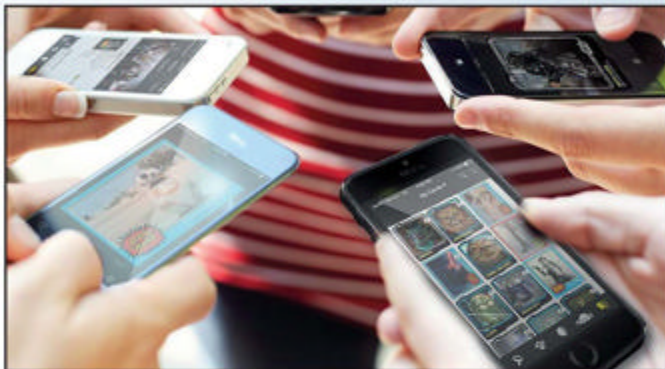
Star Wars Insider: Can you tell us about your involvement in this project and the challenges of making collecting work as an app?

Ian Hundiak: I am responsible for everything from helping create new card sets to managing daily app operations. I've actually had the opportunity to work on all Topps Digital apps, but I grew up a huge *Star Wars* fan, so working on this app in particular has been truly special for me. We're really proud of this app.

Neil Kleid: Everything you see or touch in the app has been visually masterminded by myself and our dedicated designer, Matt Petz. We brainstorm design concepts for both the content (cards, awards, packs, transmission/Cantina graphics) and the flourishes and interactions (blast doors!). I oversee the design language and experience for the entire digital suite of Topps apps, but I was a *Star Wars* fan long before I ever loved sports!

Ian: I would say that one of the biggest challenges we've faced has been crafting an experience that is both familiar, and yet, unique for older collectors. We've found that for younger people, digital collecting pretty much comes naturally, but older collectors, who have memories of going to the corner store and buying Topps *Star Wars* cards in 1977, have a set idea of what it means to collect cards. We've spent, literally, years tweaking and perfecting our apps so that opening a digital pack of cards feels as rewarding now on your phone as it did then at the corner store. Based on feedback we've gotten from a lot of our regular users over the age of 50, we believe that we've achieved just that. The other challenge we've faced has been making cards for every kind of collector.

For instance, some people only collect cards from Episodes IV-VI, while other younger users are only interested in *Star Wars Rebels* and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. We also have super-



users that own duplicates of literally every card we've released, and also casual users who just want to chase cards, trade, and collect on their way to work or school. It's of the utmost importance to us that we release cards for everybody. If there is a single user that doesn't have a card that they enjoy chasing, we need to step it up.

There are always going to be skeptics who wonder about the digital trading experience as a whole. But think of it this way: I used to trade *Star Wars* cards on the corner with my friends and neighbors as a kid, building an experience familiar to anyone who's ever traded any kind of card. Card Trader allows you to magnify that experience on a global scale—the entire world is your corner, and you can trade with anyone, anytime, anywhere. No one at Topps Digital would ever discount the experience of collecting physical trading cards—we're avid collectors ourselves!—but with Card Trader, I can carry my *Star Wars* cards wherever I go: Home, work, Celebration, etc. I can trade as I commute, open packs wherever I please.

Why do you think *Star Wars* inspires such devotion in terms of collecting?

Neil: Every character in the *Star Wars* universe is special to someone. I'm a Max Rebo man. You put that crazy Ortolan

on a mug or action figure or T-shirt or trading card? I'll buy it. And, as Ian said, it spans generations. My six-year-old son is just starting his journey through a galaxy long ago and far away, and I get to share that experience with him. I get to connect him to the generation that came before, those who are already out there collecting and enjoying the worlds and mythologies of *Star Wars*.

There's a link to something

larger than ourselves—you see it in other fandoms, true, but *Star Wars* was one of the first and oldest and it makes no difference if you're a jaded art director turning 40 or a bright-eyed kindergartner turning seven... *Star Wars* turns us all into kids again, sitting together in a darkened theater, thrilling to the *Millennium Falcon* soaring overhead, hoping Mom or Dad will buy the playset for our birthday.

Is there a character you'd like to see featured that we haven't seen yet?

Ian: I've been counting down the days until we unleash the Rancor on the app. I am happy to say, however, that the Rancor will definitely be one of the many new characters featured in our 2015 Base Set Series 2, which is coming very soon.

We have some really exciting new features in the works, but I can't say much about that yet. Other than that, know that you'll definitely see lots of Episode VII content in the app this year. We're as excited about the film as you are, and the journey to its release is going to be crazy. Get ready!

Neil: Hopefully that means Maliki, the heartbroken Rancor Keeper, will be joining our giant, beastly friend. Truth be told, there are a ton of Tatooine luminaries I'm looking forward to seeing in the future (Kardue'sai' Mallo! Ree-Yees! Ben Quadinaros!), but I'm more excited about dropping our first Ahsoka card!

MORE TO SAY

The Topps *Star Wars* Card Trader app is available now!

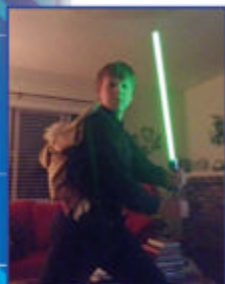
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Lowell feels the Force thanks to a very special shirt!

A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION!

I had a fantastic time at *Star Wars* Celebration Anaheim. I even camped out on Wednesday for *The Force Awakens* panel featuring J. J. Abrams and Kathleen Kennedy. Before I left to attend the event, I scrambled around the house trying to make my Luke Skywalker cosplay outfit. I originally wanted to wear my black

turtleneck to look like Luke in *Return of the Jedi*, but I couldn't find it anywhere. So I went with a black shirt instead. *The Force Awakens* panel was amazing, but I realized something when it was over. That black-buttoned shirt belonged to my Grandpa, who passed away in September. I loved him dearly. He was a huge *Star Wars* fan, and he saw the first *Star Wars* with my Mom in 1977 when she was 15 years old. I am so glad I took his shirt to that panel because it made the experience even more special. It made it feel like he was there in spirit, like Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda, and Anakin Skywalker. I will cherish that day for the rest of my life!—Lowell Renold, by email

What a great story, Lowell. It sounds like the Force was truly with you that day!



The original *Star Wars* on the cover of a Marvel comic!

WHAT'S IN A (FAN) NAME?

Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope came out on May 25, 1977, and ever since, there has been one thing missing—a collective name for fans! There has been an official *Star Wars* Fan Club, documentaries on *Star Wars* fans, and numerous podcasts and websites devoted to the saga, but still no collective name for the loyal fans! We know about Trekkies



The *Star Warriors* also appear on a Topps trading card!

(changed to Trekker, but that name takes away some of the fun of the original term), which gives identity and a commonality to *Star Trek* fans. A documentary about *Star Wars* fans was released in 2001 entitled *Starwoids*. This awkward term for *Star Wars* fans seemed to be forcibly applied since there was no voting, no acknowledgement, or even acceptance of the term. *Starwoids* sounds like something you'd need ointment for! Its presence on Facebook has 4 likes, which indicates its rejection by *Star Wars* fans.

I propose that we adopt a *Star Wars* fan name from a term that has already been used on trading cards, Marvel comic books, and other material. The third series of Topps' *Star Wars* cards (with yellow borders) had a card numbered 178, entitled, "The *Star Warriors*."

This term was applied to all of the heroes in the *Star Wars* film. It also appeared in issue #19 (1979) of the Marvel comic book, which had the caption, "The *Star Warriors* Face - The Ultimate Gamble!" Issue #35 (1980) had the caption,

"Darth Vader plays a game of death against the *Star Warriors*!" So there is precedent for the term, "Star Warriors."—Kyle Fukumoto (aka Jedi Jondee), by email

Very interesting, Kyle! "Star Warriors" is pretty cool. What do other readers think?

QUALITY TIME

I think most *Star Wars* fans have memories relating to the saga that go beyond just the movies. I remember going to my grandparents' house after seeing the first *Star Wars* movie. I was six and my mother took me. And like all six year olds I was excited! I was even more excited when *The Empire Strikes Back* was released. There was only one problem: My mom didn't want to take me! Things looked bleak, until my grandfather said he would take me.

Now what you have to understand about my Grandpa was he was the type of man who would yell at you if you squeezed the toothpaste tube in the middle! Perhaps not the ideal choice for a *Star Wars* movie, but I was desperate. We went to the film and an interesting thing happened... he enjoyed it.

This experience led to movie time with Grandpa. He took my sister and I to all sorts of movies, from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* to *E.T.* My sister and I enjoyed seeing this new side of Grandpa. He passed away in 1983, but I will always be grateful for the time I got to spend with him... all thanks to this wonderful film from a galaxy far, far away!—Michael Shaffer, Reynoldsville, PA

That's a lovely story, Michael. It sounds like Grandpa was a big kid at heart!

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MARVEL COMICS 2015

A MARVEL GALAXY

HOW STAR WARS CAME HOME AND
SMASHED RECORDS!

EXCLUSIVE!



MARVEL IS PUBLISHING *STAR WARS* COMICS ONCE AGAIN. *INSIDER* MEETS THE EDITORS, CREATORS, AND MEMBERS OF THE LUCASFILM TEAM TO TALK ABOUT WEAVING COMICS INTO CANON AND WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON. WORDS: **AMY RATCLIFFE**

A long time ago, 38 years to be precise, Marvel Comics published the first *Star Wars* comic book. Stories about Luke Skywalker, Leia Organa, Han Solo, and many ancillary characters expanded the mythology and gave fans a larger universe to explore. Sequential stories, penned and illustrated by talented creators in the comics industry, poured out of Marvel through 1986. Dark Horse Comics further enriched the galaxy with its *Star Wars* comics published from 1991-2014. And then, as of January 2015, the reins returned to Marvel and a new era of storytelling began.

The first entry in this era of storytelling—*Star Wars* #1 by writer Jason Aaron and artist John Cassaday—made a splash by selling over one million copies.

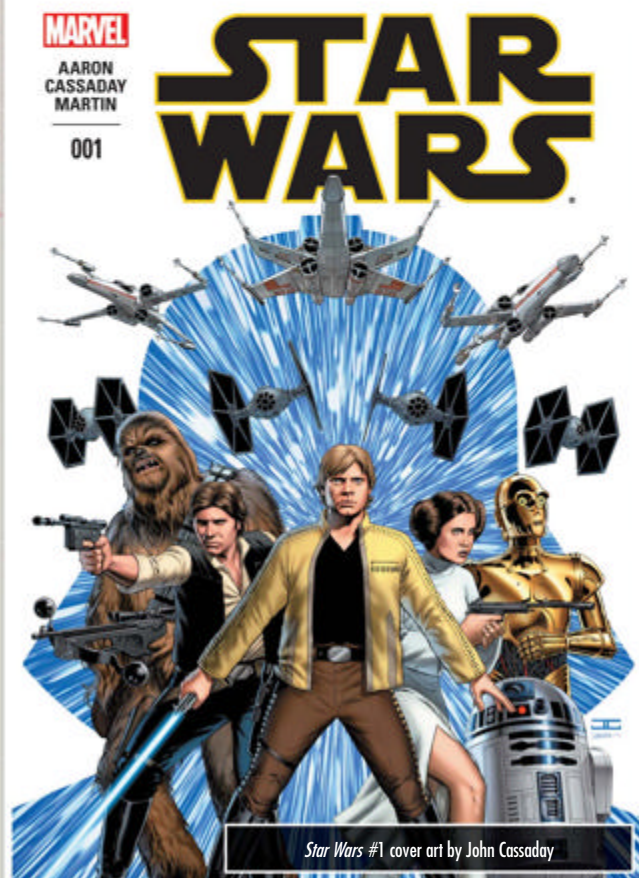
"THE SALES HAVE BEEN TREMENDOUS AND I THINK THAT JUST PROVED WE WERE RIGHT, THAT THIS IS SOMETHING PEOPLE WANT."—JORDAN D. WHITE, MARVEL EDITOR

It was the first comic to reach such a high sales number in years. Sales for subsequent issues of the series, although slightly lower, remained in six digit figures. Marvel's other *Star Wars* titles are also raking in high pre-order numbers. The response from fans has impressed Marvel editor Jordan D. White. He's in charge of Marvel's *Star Wars* comics and said, "The sales have been tremendous and I think that just proved we were right, that this is something people want, and we can bring it to more people than anyone else could have. Hopefully that means we can keep the series going successfully as long as humanly possible. This gives it a really nice

boost at the start to carry us through."

Along with the ongoing *Star Wars* series, Marvel is also publishing: *Darth Vader* (ongoing) by Kieron Gillen and Salvador Larroca, *Kanan: The Last Padawan* (ongoing) by Greg Weisman and Pepe Larraz, and *Princess Leia* (miniseries) by Mark Waid and Terry Dodson. They're adding to that lineup soon with a Lando Calrissian miniseries by Charles Soule and Alex Maleev, and a *Shattered Empire* miniseries by Greg Rucka and Marco Checchetto.

Unlike the majority of previous *Star Wars* comics, the events in Marvel's current stories are canon. They take place in (continued page 16)



Star Wars #1 cover art by John Cassaday



Princess Leia #1 cover art by Terry Dodson

STAR WARS

The flagship series, *Star Wars*, is currently the only entry in Marvel's lineup to focus on an ensemble cast. The first six issues feature work by writer Jason Aaron and artist John Cassaday. A guest artist will step in for issue #7 and Stuart Immonen will pick up artist duties as of *Star Wars* #8. The tale begins not too long after the destruction of the first Death Star and sees Luke, Leia, and Han continue their fight against the Empire by attempting to take out a weapons factory on Cymoon 1.

***Star Wars* Insider: Did you specifically suggest Jason and John to Lucasfilm for *Star Wars*?**

Jordan D. White: Jason Aaron and John Cassaday were absolutely the two people we went into the pitch with wanting to be the opening team of this book. We brought [Lucasfilm] samples for a bunch of people but we said, "This is who we want to do this book." We stand behind them and the book has shown why we felt that way.

What is Stuart bringing to the project?

He is so good. I'm starting to see art from him. It's so wonderful. John Cassaday is amazing and we're hoping to get him back again, but he did six issues for us that are terrific and so beautiful. He loves *Star Wars* so he made sure that this would work. And hopefully we can get him back again to do more work for us, but for the second arc we're going with Stuart Immonen—and he is so terrific and so excited as well. I think people will be very, very into what he's doing. 🌈



Star Wars #2 interior art by John Cassaday

DARTH VADER

Marvel's *Darth Vader* miniseries is showing us a different side of the powerful Sith Lord. The story by writer Kieron Gillen and artist Salvador Larroca takes place after *A New Hope* and presents a Darth Vader who is trying to get back on the Emperor's good side after his failure at the Battle of Yavin. At the same time, Darth Vader has encountered Luke Skywalker, and the rebel pilot is very much on his radar.

Star Wars Insider: What's it like to explore a more vulnerable side of Darth Vader?

Kieron Gillen: A lot of that came from the exact position we're in the story. At the end of *A New Hope*, Vader is spinning away in his TIE fighter. He's one of the only survivors of the Death Star, the biggest military disaster of all time which ruins the Emperor's 20 year plan, and it's now all just fallen apart and Vader is at least partially responsible. He did let the rebels get away deliberately. When you come into *The Empire Strikes Back*, Vader's in the strongest position that he's ever been in, but Vader in *A New Hope* isn't exactly Force-choking random people. He is on a shorter leash. And in *Empire*, he's definitely acting with more carte blanche. That implies there has to be a story between the two and that's where I've started it. How does Vader deal with this setback? How does the Emperor now view Vader in this situation? And what is the power balance

between the two? The relationship between Vader and the Emperor is really key to the book.

Given that we don't see Vader's face, it has to be a challenge to make him expressive. What is Salvador bringing to the project in that regard?

He's bringing a real authenticity. And he's an enormous *Star Wars* fan. You can tell that in the work. Vader's inexpressiveness is as much of a writing problem as an art problem. As well, I didn't want to get too much beneath the mask as a reader. I wanted to remain slightly distant from Vader. We want to make sure you have a feeling of when he's doing stuff, but we'd never want you to be completely sure. That's why I don't do internal monologues. I do one panel flashbacks to show something Vader is thinking about, but that's all you get. What Vader is really feeling, you have to ascertain. It's not going to be a book where you get too close to Vader. It is without a doubt a villain book. We want to stick to the idea that you should be nervous [if you're] in the same room with Darth Vader. 🌈



Darth Vader #1 cover art by Adi Granov, interior art by Salvador Larroca



"WE DON'T HAVE FREE REIN. WE CAN'T HAVE DARTH VADER TAKE OFF HIS HELMET AND HAVE LONG FLOWING BLOND HAIR!"—JORDAN D. WHITE, MARVEL EDITOR

the same universe as the films and television series. White says Marvel is very aware the stories it tells can have a meaningful impact on the existing universe: "First of all, because we are a part of the canon we work very closely with Lucasfilm and their Story Group. Everything we do goes through the Story Group and is vetted by them. Any crazy ideas we have about being able to change anything or to re-envision things or how things happen, they see it first and they'll give their thoughts on it, too. We don't have free rein. We can't have Darth Vader take off his helmet and have long, flowing blond hair or anything like that. We can't just be like, 'Here's what's happening. Too bad. It's canon.' We run everything by them."

Jennifer Heddle, senior editor at Lucasfilm, explains

how she works directly with White and facilitates communication between him and the Story Group. She and the Story Group offer input and navigate through any problems that may come up, and the ideas for the stories to be explored in the comics come from both Marvel and Lucasfilm. "It's usually the comic book writer who comes up with the story," she says. "He or she will submit an outline and then that will go to Story Group to get their take on it. On the other hand, there are times when Story Group might say, 'Hey, here's an idea for something that we'd really like to explore, do you think that Marvel would still be interested in doing it?' And then I'll go back to them."

White enjoys collaborating with Story Group. He says,



Star Wars #1 interior art by John Cassaday

KANAN: THE LAST PADAWAN

Kanan: The Last Padawan is the first Marvel title to take place outside of the original trilogy era. The ongoing series, by writer Greg Weisman and artist Pepe Larraz follows Kanan Jarrus as he escapes Order 66 and goes on the run from the Empire. Since Weisman worked on the first season of *Star Wars Rebels*, he was able to bring unique insight to the project.

Star Wars Insider: Was this particular backstory for Kanan developed while you worked on *Rebels*?

Greg Weisman: When Dave [Filoni], Simon [Kinberg], the Story Group, the writers, and I were writing season one of *Rebels* many months ago, we basically mapped out backstories for our six leads. All of the steps, including *A New Dawn* [by John Jackson Miller] and *Kanan: The Last Padawan* were laid out back then. It's incredibly exciting to be able to actually tell this story because it's a huge story in Kanan's life. It's a significant event in his development. It's not just, "Oh yeah, we're going to tell another story. Here's another adventure." It's a huge event in his life. That's also part of the fun of it. *Star Wars* is often an ensemble piece. It's often about these huge, historic events in the galaxy. This time, we're taking one of these major events, but we're seeing it through the view of one single individual. So to me, there's a unique feel to it that I'm very excited about.

How much time will have passed by the end of the first arc of the series?

We're looking at more or less a year in the life, give or take. So, we're looking at the first year of Caleb's life because this is before he took the name Kanan. We're looking at the first year of Caleb's life after Order 66, the day before, and about give or take a year after. This is not designed to be, just to be clear, sum total. It's not like this will completely fill in the gap of Order 66 and *A New Dawn*. It's not designed to be encyclopedic and take you all the way from point A to point B. 🌟

"They know good stories and obviously they know *Star Wars* backwards and forwards. When we come in with a suggestion that they think is too wild they can go, 'Whoa, that's a little much, but maybe what about this?' Or sometimes they'll come in with a suggestion going, 'This is a thing that you guys can probably explore.' That opens up

so much to us and then we'll go back with other nutty ideas!" And he emphasizes that the Story Group is tremendously helpful when it comes to providing solutions.

Marvel is off to a strong start with its return to the galaxy far, far away, but some fans have questioned why the comics are by and large set



Kanan: The Last Padawan interior art by Pepe Larraz

STAR WARS PRINCESS LEIA

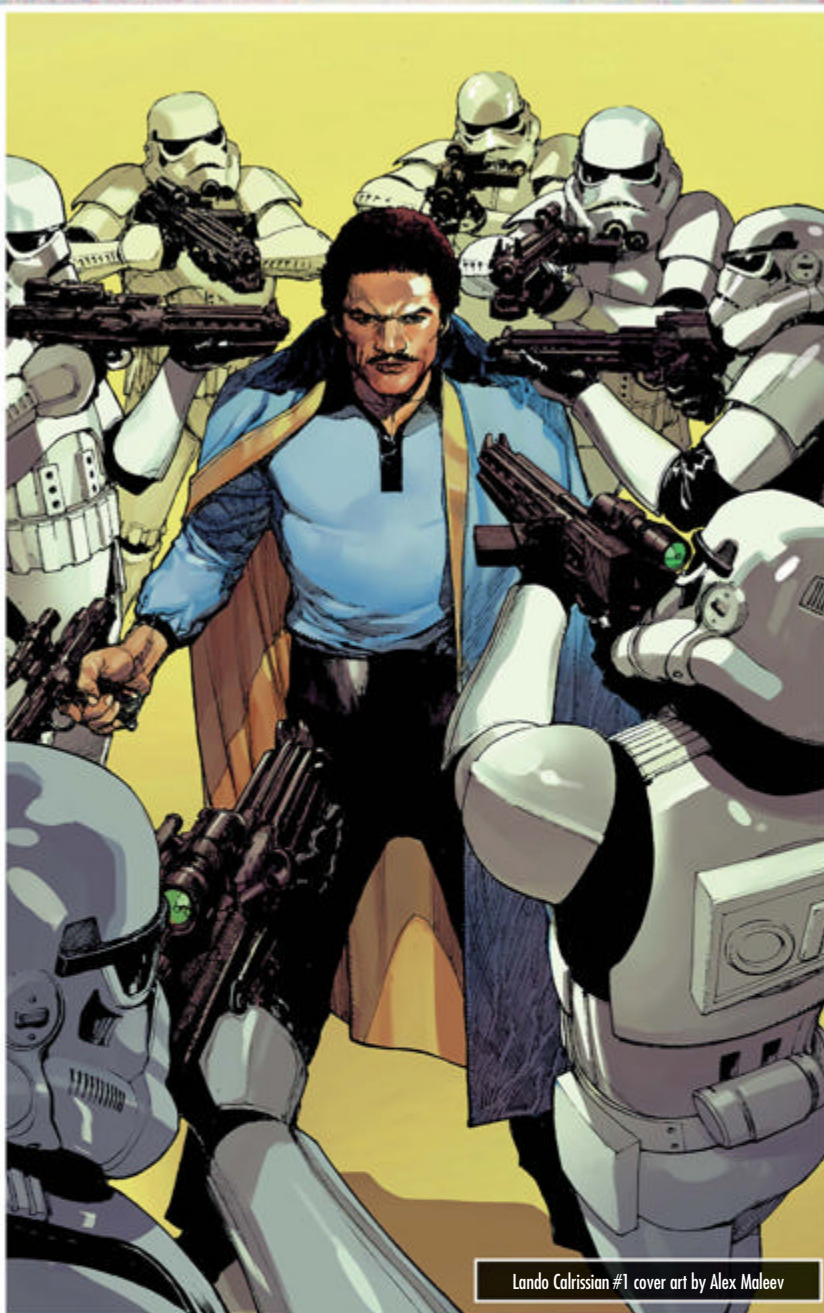
MARVEL

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002



Princess Leia #2 cover art by Terry Dodson



LANDO

The *Princess Leia* miniseries will reach its conclusion soon, and a new miniseries, starring the smoothest scoundrel in the galaxy, will take its place. The *Lando* miniseries by writer Charles Soule and artist Alex Maleev brings us an exciting Lando Calrissian story set between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Star Wars Insider: Tell us more about the time period the *Lando* miniseries takes place in and what he's up to?

Charles Soule: The story takes place between Episodes IV and V, and Lando isn't on Bespin yet. He's more of a wandering... well, I wouldn't call him a con man, exactly, but he's never completely on the up and up. I think Lando doesn't necessarily want to be involved with shady dealings, but circumstances tend to work against him. He's essentially a good, honest guy—the one we saw in *Jedi*—but my thinking is that there's something in his history that he can't ever really get past. One bad decision that he's been paying for ever since. He's always awesome, though—he never loses his charm, and he never loses his nerve.

The plot of this particular story revolves around Lando's latest attempt to finally come out ahead. He has to pull off a pretty amazing job, and he does it by assembling a little crew of extremely skilled operatives, including at least one familiar face from the films. That's where we begin, but it's certainly not where we end up. Things never seem to work out for good old Lando—deals tend to get worse all the time.

What has it been like to work with Alex on this project?

Alex Maleev is very good at a lot of things—he's one of the most well-known artists in the business for a reason—but I think he's particularly good at conveying expressions and emotion on his characters. For a story about Lando Calrissian, that's essential. The readers have to get his roguish charm very clearly—and to an extent, they also need to know that sometimes (even most of the time?) he's faking it. Alex is fabulous at that, but we'll also get to see some incredible action sequences, from space battles to hand-to-hand combat. I can't wait for everyone to see it. 🌈

during the original trilogy. "Our idea was to kick it off by having the two ongoing books and then the series of miniseries, but all set around the same period in the same way that all *X-Men* books—for the most part—are set at the same time now," White explains. "By creating a line of books that can interact with each other if they want to, readers can bounce back and forth. If you're reading one, that's fine. You get a great story. And if you're reading multiple titles you can see how they play together and how they're all part of the same universe. That being said, with *Kanan*, you can see

we are totally interested in doing stuff in other parts of the *Star Wars* timeline. I think going forward we will end up seeing that more, even if we do keep that central kernel of our line in the original trilogy."

Shattered Empire will be Marvel's first title to take place after *Return of the Jedi*, and other eras may be mined as well. Heddle reveals, "I can tell you that we are discussing ideas that do take place outside of the original trilogy. It is a lot of what you're seeing now. We are in discussions for exploring different areas, probably starting next year." 🌟

Photo of Vanessa Marshall courtesy of Cherie Roberts

VANESSA'S VIEW

FATHERS IN FANDOM

I often hear from parents, who enjoy watching *Star Wars Rebels* with their kids—as a fun, healthy family activity. Indeed there is something for everyone at any and every age. But lately I hear more specifically from fathers, who are thrilled to share the *Star Wars* saga with their daughters! I found this so moving, that I wanted to share their stories with you!

At least twice a day my daughter, who is three years old, comes up to me and announces, “Hera flies the



HI, STAR WARSFANS! WITH FATHER'S DAY FAST APPROACHING—JUNE 21—IT FEELS LIKE A GREAT TIME TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE DADS WHO SHARE THEIR LOVE OF THE SAGA WITH THEIR DAUGHTERS!

AN ACTOR PREPARES

I have always been very close to my father, John Marshall. He is an Emmy award-winning TV News Reporter with a passion for flying. He was once in the Air Force, and today you can find him doing aerobatics in his awesome new plane along the coast of California. Recently, I visited my father in his airplane hangar to get some flying tips. I wanted to get a better sense of how Hera might feel piloting the *Ghost*! My father explained, “When I fly, I love getting my perspective of the Earth from up there. When you see only mountains, oceans, rivers, and deserts, the world becomes a beautiful place.”

Before take off, I am astonished by his attention to detail. All systems are double-checked. Any slip in concentration could have deadly consequences. It clearly takes tremendous discipline and focus. Once in the air, however, when he is doing his aerobatic maneuvers, when he makes his plane swirl and dance in the sky, there is also a kind of letting go. He seems to surrender to the plane's momentum and trust his instincts completely—as he glides upside down! It is a thrilling experience to be his passenger. All of this helps me better understand Hera's supreme piloting skills, as well as her psyche. I am so grateful to learn all of this from my own Dad!



ship, Daddy!" She can readily describe her favorite character: "green," "smart," and "like the mommy." While the geek dad in me is thrilled to see his little girl proclaiming she wants a pink lightsaber and a spaceship of her own so she can fly with Hera, I'm excited and proud to see her finding strong, smart, and resourceful female characters. Please don't misunderstand me—there have never been more positive female role models on TV. I'm just so happy to find something my daughter and I can cuddle up on the couch and enjoy together on the same level. Thank you, and the rest of your co-stars, for all your hard work!—Casey Roberts



I'm writing on behalf of my daughter Keely, age six. Keely's been watching *Rebels* along with her dad (that's me!) and we love sharing the adventure together! It's a spectacular show. As a lifelong fan (since 1977), I'm grateful for all your hard work. Thank you for being a positive influence on my daughter, and for keeping *Star Wars* alive and well! May the Force be with you.—Gary Shaller



My daughter and I watch *Rebels* together. She's nine and a huge fan! We have a pact to re-watch Episode III, *Rebels*, and the original trilogy before *The Force Awakens* in December, the first *Star Wars* movie we'll both be watching together for the first time! Thanks again from two happy fans! —Ash Hannant



I met Alex Rybak on Twitter, when he wanted to interview me for www.yodasnews.com. Since then, I've learned more about his passion for *Star Wars* and his wonderful family.

"As someone who grew up entrenched in a galaxy far, far away," he said, "I always felt compelled to share this fantasy with my children someday. When I introduced my kids to *The Clone Wars* they loved it. Seeing the look of excitement on their faces as they got their first glimpse into this universe was one of the most fulfilling moments I have had as a father. They have taught me to not be so hung up on tradition, but to boldly go in a new direction (much like the *Star Wars* franchise is now). My children now have a deep love for *The Clone Wars*, *Rebels*, and even the live-action films. It is so rewarding to have a bond with them through this universe, to have others to share and enjoy it with!"



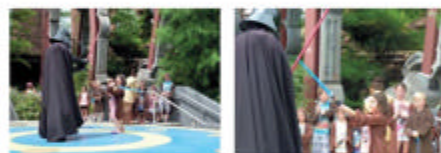
I met Keith and Emily Garrick on Facebook. Keith emailed me to get an autographed photo for his daughter's birthday. He said, "I contacted you because my daughter looks up to the women of *Star Wars*, as do I. And it's just fun to be wrapped up in the fandom!" Since then, I have become quite close with them both, and I am thrilled to know that they are watching *Rebels* together!

Earlier this year, I was the voice of the *Winter X Games* on ESPN. When we finished recording, one of the producers,



John Bartmon, confessed that he and his daughter (Hanna) are huge *Star Wars* fans.

"My relationship with Hanna and *Star Wars* started before she was born," John explained,



"When my wife was nine months pregnant, we went to see Episode III. Now Hanna has all the books and watches *Rebels*. We have the *Clone Wars* on Blu-ray. Hanna knows all the newer stuff much better than I do, but it was something we bonded over immediately. And one of my proudest moments was the day both of my daughters, Hanna and

Nicole, defeated Vader at Disneyworld in Orlando!"

Happy Father's day to all the fantastic fathers in the fandom. I thank you for your enthusiasm and applaud you for sharing the saga with your daughters! May the Force be with you, always!

MORE TO SAY

Follow Vanessa on Twitter: @vanmarshall

HAVE YOU?



BRANDON ALINGER, AUTHOR OF *STAR WARS COSTUMES: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY*, CONCLUDES OUR EXCLUSIVE BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE COSTUMES OF *RETURN OF THE JEDI*.

STAR WARS STYLE



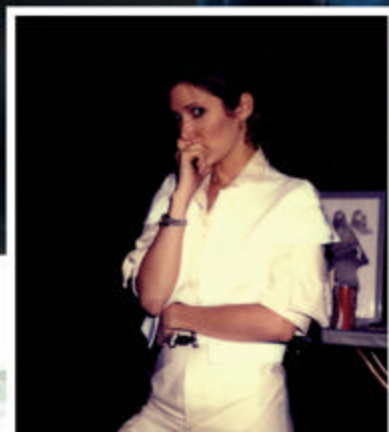
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22 INSIDER

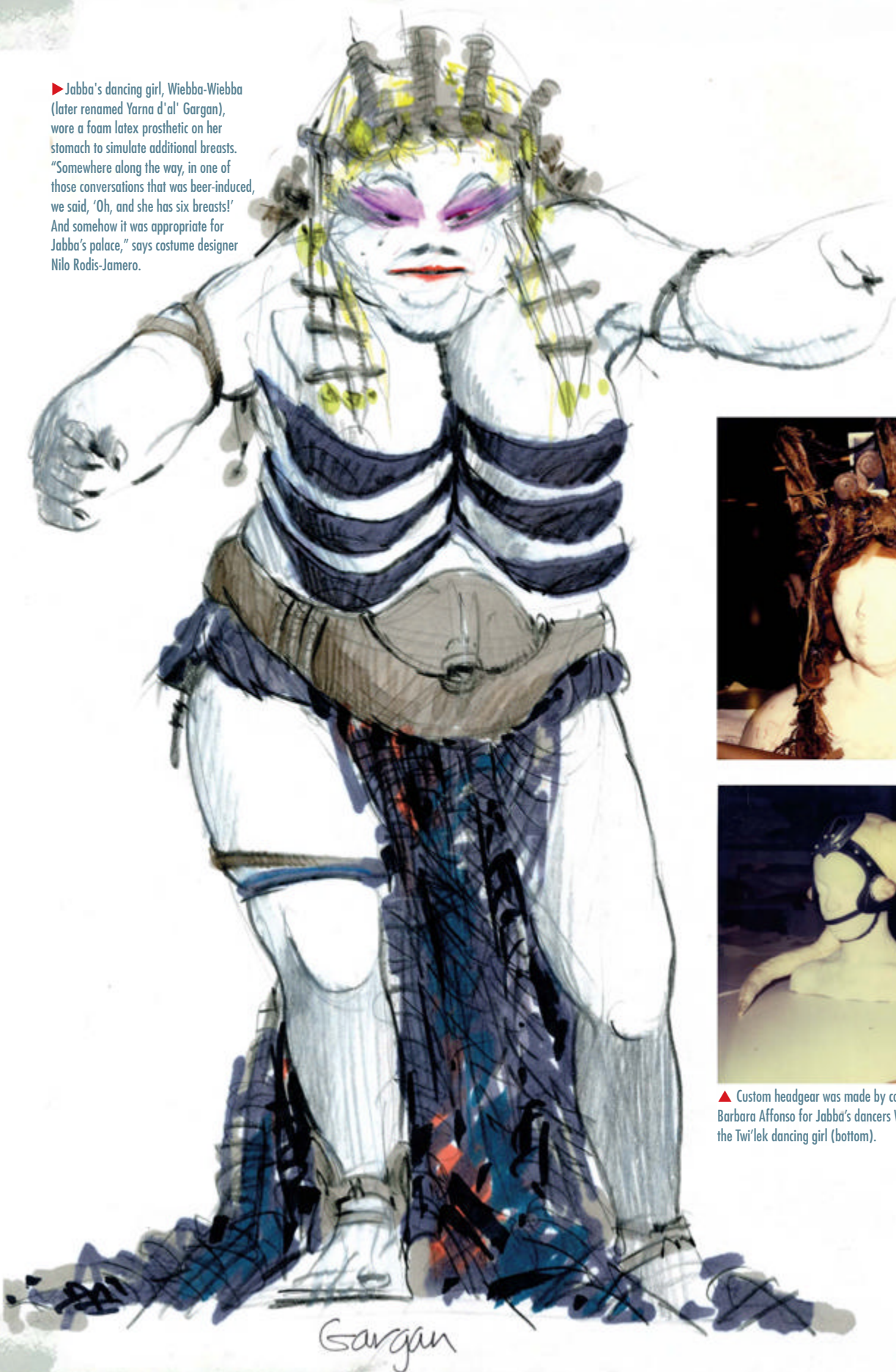


▲ During a costume fitting, costume supervisor Mary Still inspects Carrie Fisher's Endor headgear.

► Fisher tries out a muslin prototype of her war room outfit.



► Jabba's dancing girl, Wiebba-Wiebba (later renamed Yarna d'al' Gargan), wore a foam latex prosthetic on her stomach to simulate additional breasts. "Somewhere along the way, in one of those conversations that was beer-induced, we said, 'Oh, and she has six breasts!' And somehow it was appropriate for Jabba's palace," says costume designer Nilo Rodis-Jamero.

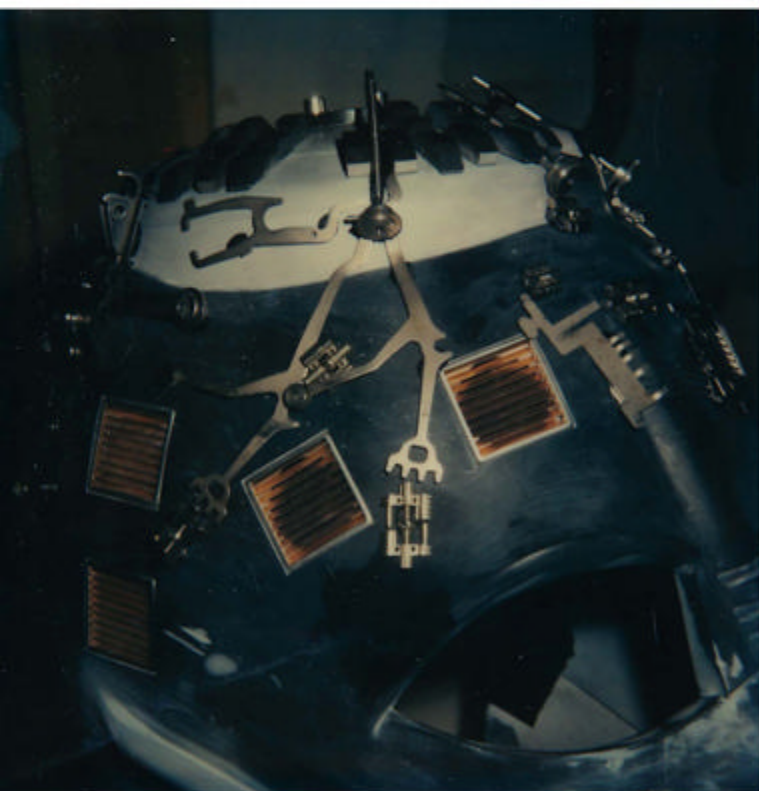


▲ Custom headgear was made by costume accessory specialist Barbara Affonso for Jabba's dancers Wiebba-Wiebba (top) and Oola, the Twi'lek dancing girl (bottom).



▲ A rare behind-the-scenes shot of stormtrooper stunt performer (second from left) Sandy Gross, pictured here taking a break on location with (from left) Mike Cassidy, Julius Le Flore, and dresser Barbara Affonso, shows that the Imperial forces are not limited to just men.

► A fresh set of approximately 50 stormtrooper units was manufactured for *Return of the Jedi*. The costumes were photographed as pristine white outfits in the Death Star sequences, which were shot first, and later dirtied down for use in filming Endor sequences on location.



▲ Darth Vader's "reveal" helmet was built by pattern maker Brian Archer at Elstree Studios. These in-progress shots show an alternative greeblie (the pieces added to the basic helmet) configuration to the final piece.





▲ A rare look at the full costume of Ree-Yees — or “Three Eyes” as he was known during production.

► One of three Prune Face characters who appeared in the rebel briefing room, this character featured oversized space goggles.



PRUNE FACE



YAK FACE

▲ Yak Face's simple attire is seen in this behind-the-scenes continuity Polaroid.



Controllers
BUNKER

▲ An Imperial controller, wearing the "cheese grater" helmet originally made for *A New Hope*, and a pair of non-regulation sunglasses.



HUMAN SKIFF GUARD
Sc 15

▲ A rarely seen human skiff guard, wearing a helmet made by the "plastic boys" from a modified motorcycle helmet.



Sc 44. LUKE GOES
TO X-WING

▲ Mark Hamill adjusts his Tatooine sandstorm goggles in this continuity Polaroid taken during production. The scene—the first to be shot for the movie—was ultimately deleted from the final theatrical version.





AS THE FOUNDER OF THE LEGENDARY COSTUMING GROUP, THE 501ST, **ALBIN JOHNSON** HAS MADE A HUGE CONTRIBUTION TO THE STAR WARS EXPERIENCE FOR MANY FANS AROUND THE WORLD. INTERVIEW: **JONATHAN WILKINS**

When did you first become aware of *Star Wars*?

I was a little kid from the deep woods of the Ozarks in 1977. I had never been to a movie theater. My folks moved us to the big city of Charlotte, North Carolina, and I saw the *Star Wars* poster in the lobby. I said to my dad, "What is *that*!?" My dad was a World War II pilot, so he looked at the fighter planes in the background and said, "Looks like a war movie. Wanna go?" We sat in this huge theater not knowing what to expect. When the Star Destroyer rolled onto the screen and the explosions started I was gob-smacked. I had nothing to compare the experience to. When the stormtroopers burst through the door, I was riveted. *Who were these guys? Space soldiers? I want to be one of those guys!*

Do you have a favorite scene?

As much as I love the stormtroopers, Luke Skywalker was my hero growing up. I love *The Empire Strikes Back* where Luke's moral compass is challenged. I get chills as Luke faces Vader in the carbonite chamber and the words roll out, "The Force is strong with you, young Skywalker... but you are not a Jedi yet."

Do you have a favorite *Star Wars* toy?

We were poor growing up and couldn't afford many of the *Star Wars* toys. I dug through couches to gather nickels to buy an action figure. One Christmas, I was blown away when my parents bought me the *Millennium Falcon* playset. I still have it to this day. Any time someone mentions the magic of Christmas I remember getting the *Millennium Falcon* and it warms my heart.

What's your favorite film?

The Empire Strikes Back hit me at a crucial time in my adolescence. It spoke to the heart of every person contemplating right versus wrong and the seduction of doing things the easy way. The dark and foreboding tone filled me with dread, but also with hope. Every scene made you feel like everything was on the line and the heroes were in

danger. I feel so much hope watching Luke and Leia look out that window at the end.

Do you have a favorite piece of *Star Wars* music?

The music from the asteroid chase in *The Empire Strikes Back* is a masterpiece of kinetic motion, building slowly with the staccato of the strings and soaring to those horn blasts as the *Falcon* rips into high gear. As a teenager I had a tape cassette of the soundtrack. I felt like I was flying in my second-hand Pinto when the music played. I'm lucky I didn't get a speeding ticket!

What has been your proudest moment as founder of the 501st?

I used to say it was standing next to George Lucas at the Rose Parade in 2007. He turned to me and motioned to the 200 troopers from around the world standing at attention, then said "Well done!" I couldn't believe Mr. Lucas would find our efforts worthy of such kindness, much less congratulating me. But I'd have to say at Toronto Fan Expo last year a young man rolled up in a wheelchair and asked for my autograph. I was puzzled. I wasn't in costume, so how did he know who I was? He struggled to speak, but made out the words, "You're Albin Johnson. You created the 501st Legion. They're the coolest. Thank you." That was humbling. That's when you know your efforts touch lives at every level. I will never forget that.



Han or Luke?

I didn't like Han always trying to bust Luke's dreams of the Force. I was glad Han came around to help the rebellion, but it was Luke who was struggling to save his own soul and accomplish something great. I'll always love Luke, he's my hero.



Vader or Maul?

Vader hands-down. I started the 501st Legion as "Vader's Fist," because I thought it would be cool imagining Vader having an off-the-books personal hit squad of stormtroopers. In the movies, he's always motioning for stormtroopers to follow him or blast someone—I like to imagine that was his personal elite guard!

Boba or Jango?

Who's Jango? I made my own Boba Fett armor one year and at Halloween just stood in the corner of a bar cradling my blaster. Everyone came up to me saying, "Dude, you are so intimidating just standing there like Fett!" Boba Fett did it first and did it best!

Leia or Padmé?

Princess Leia haunted my dreams as a boy. She's pretty and she can fight! What boy wouldn't fall in love with her?

Stormtrooper or clone trooper?

Stormtrooper. Clone troopers are cool, no doubt. But you can't improve on the skeletal-white visage of those original troopers with their hollow black eyes.

Threepio or Artoo?

Threepio was my first ever action figure! I loved the shiny gold! But Artoo is everyone's friend; he could get you through anything. I have two collections: stormtrooper items and Artoo items. I dream of a world where everybody has an astromech droid. We'd all be much happier and resourceful people. 🤖

MORE TO SAY

Read more about the 501st and their amazing work at www.501st.com

HAVE YOU?

AN ALL-NEW TALE

REBEL BLUFF

BY MICHAEL KOGGE



Lando Calrissian couldn't believe his bad luck. Another round of sabacc had dealt him yet another awful hand. To win the main pot and clear his debts, he needed his cards to total a positive or negative twenty-three. Right now he had a negative five—and things weren't looking like they were about to improve any time soon. It had been ten lousy deals in a row and he was down to his last credits.

He took stock of how his competition fared around the table. Old Jho, the cantina's Ithorian proprietor, remained quiet and still, except for a vein twitching along the trunk of his neck, betraying his distress. On the other hand, the young woman seated next to him, a brunette in an expeditionary jacket and baggy trousers, didn't seem at all bothered by her

cards. She took sips from her beverage and looked absently around the cantina.

Lando wagered she came from Capital City, as her face had none of the wind-cut lines of growing up on Lothal's plains, and her hands, delicate and uncalledoused, spoke of office work, probably in a data center. Her eyes revealed the most, as they always did with humans. There was a roguish glint to them, a sparkle of intelligence that belied her naïve appearance. No matter how hard she tried to affect a casual indifference, she couldn't hide from Lando that her gaze kept drifting to the cantina entrance. This woman was anticipating that someone might storm in, perhaps a crazy ex-lover or bill collector. This was a woman on the run.

The final player, a Devaronian with a broken horn, showed no hint of anxiety. Nor should he have. Cikatro Vizago was the big winner so far, having collected most of the hand pots from the individual rounds. Still, it was obvious he wanted more. His nails clicked on the table's surface, fingers encroaching on the sabacc pot that, unlike the hand pots, grew in credits with every round.

"Claws off, Vizago," Lando said, "unless you're calling sabacc."

The gangster gave Lando a sharp-toothed smile that could've made him a star in a horror holo. "I might just be," he said in his thick accent. "Ready to fold?"

"You should know I don't fold. I only win," Lando said. He might have the lousiest hand of the bunch, but he'd never show it. He'd won with less.

"Then let me make this worth your while." Vizago dumped a handful of credit chits to the sabacc pot, raising the bet by a thousand.

"I'm out," groaned Jho through the translator covering his mouths. He dropped his cards into the table's suspension field which locked their face values to a total of negative nine.

"Me too," said the woman, to Lando's surprise. She didn't seem to realize that she'd folded on a strong hand. The positive eighteen she put into the suspension field might have won if she'd continued to play.

Vizago spread his fingers out on the table, stretching them. Few would have thought anything of it, but for Lando the action exposed the gangster's bluff. The Devaronian had been rapping his nails against the table throughout the game, and this brief moment of respite demonstrated a change in his mood. Mostly likely he was relieved that the woman had folded, which meant he possessed a card total lower than the woman's eighteen.

Lando touched the chits in his pocket. He had nowhere near the thousand needed to stay in the game. What he did have was a keycard to his Ubrikkian 9000. He'd recently bought the landspeeder for scouting potential mining sites on farmland he'd purchased from Vizago—and for which he still owed a chunk of credits.

He sized up the sabacc pot, significantly fattened by Vizago's contribution. The pile would more than pay his debt. And with two players out of the game, Lando liked the odds. Years on the casino circuit had taught him when to double down. In the right situation, luck could be as reliable as a trusty blaster.

Lando tossed in his keycard. "All I got."

Vizago snarled. "Oh no. Don't try to pawn off your junker on me, Calrissian."

"An Ubrikkian 9,000? That's not junk." The woman's roving eyes fixed on the keycard. "Even as parts, it's worth more than the pot. Miners are clamoring for them."

Lando gave her an appreciative nod. "The lady knows."

"Those Ubriks are a sight for sore eyes if you ask me. More like an escape pod than a speeder," Old Jho said.

"I agree." Vizago's pupils narrowed to needlepoints. "But I'll let you slide this time, Calrissian—though I pray you'll

have something left to pay me after our fun is done."

"How about the pot?" Lando said, smirking.

The sabacc table beeped, indicating commencement of the shifting phase. This was Lando's favorite part of the game, when the table's randomizer took control of the cards and transmitted signals to the receptors embedded in each. His cards began to blur and cycle through the various suits of Staves, Coins, Flasks, and Sabres, presenting brand new totals, new ways to win—and lose. Like a cosmic tease, an Idiot's Array flashed before his eyes, only to be replaced moments later by a pair of Evil Ones. Those cards themselves vanished to become something different, then something different again, offering up a cosmos of possibilities.

Lando's heart pounded. His mind speculated. While the cards kept changing, the shifting phase could end at any moment, its duration as random as its shuffle. Not knowing was the thrill. It was why he gambled. It was why he played. This was life, lived right on the edge, where one's future and fate could be determined by nothing other than pure chance.

Everyone was watching him. They would see nothing unusual. Unlike them, he'd perfected his sabacc face. Though his heart might hammer and his mind might race, on the surface Lando remained calm and collected.

When the phase ended and the cards resolved into their final ranks, his instincts proved him right again. He put his cards into the suspension field, showing an Eleven, Three, and Nine, all positive, all of Sabres. "Sabacc," he said, smoothly, as if it was to be expected.

Vizago roared, pounding the table. He chuckled his cards into the field. "Cheater!"

"Nope. Just my luck."

Lando reached for the pot when a loud clunk distracted him. He turned to see an IG-RM enforcer droid stationed outside the cantina's rear doorway.

"I thought we agreed your buddies weren't permitted," Lando said.

"Inside, we did," Vizago said. "And I promise, it won't come in."

It didn't need to. One of the droid's arms had been rigged into a blaster cannon. A well-placed shot could end Lando's sabacc career for good.

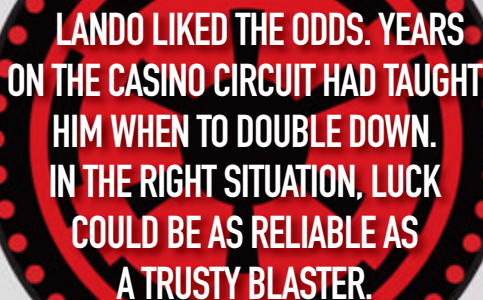
But Lando should have known not to underestimate Old Jho. "You bet it won't," the Ithorian said. Old Jho pressed a button on his belt, and a blast door whisked shut in front of the droid. "I can't stand those droids. Now get out," he told Vizago.

"Jho, come on, I just wanted to make sure everything was fair. Why don't we forget about it and keep playing, so everyone has a chance to win back their credits," Vizago said. "You'd be up for another game, wouldn't you, Calrissian?"

"Sorry, Vizago. Gotta get home. My puffer pig gets huffy if she isn't walked."

Vizago rose from the table. "How about I take *you* for a walk?"

Lando ignored him, noticing the chair next to Jho was unoccupied. "Where'd our friend go?"



**LANDO LIKED THE ODDS. YEARS
ON THE CASINO CIRCUIT HAD TAUGHT
HIM WHEN TO DOUBLE DOWN.
IN THE RIGHT SITUATION, LUCK
COULD BE AS RELIABLE AS
A TRUSTY BLASTER.**



ALL MERRY-MAKING AT THE BAR ENDED, AS DID CUDDLING AT THE BOOTH. VIZAGO SLUNK BACK INTO THE SHADOWS.

Jho swiveled his head. "I didn't even see her leave."

Lando scanned the cantina. A group of freighter bums made merry at the bar, while two Snivvians snuggled in a dark booth. There was no sign of the young woman.

"The sabacc pot," Vizago said. "She stole it!"

A glance at the table confirmed it was missing. "Karabast," Lando swore, using a word he'd only recently learned. He should've been paying more attention. In all the commotion with Vizago, she must have grabbed the pot and slipped away.

The sudden arrival of an Imperial troop transport set those concerns aside. The gray-hulled repulsorcraft parked outside the entrance, its forward and aft gun turrets pointing menacingly at the cantina. Three stormtroopers debarked from its cab.

All merry-making at the bar ended, as did cuddling in the booth. Vizago slunk back into the shadows. The cantina became so quiet Lando could hear the clacking of the stormtroopers' armor plates as they marched inside, rifles ready.

"Can I get you all some refreshments?" Jho asked.

The squad leader, his rank indicated by the orange pauldron on his shoulder, snorted. "I should arrest you for attempting to poison an officer of the Empire. Humans don't drink alien swill."

"Sir, I've served some of the best TIE pilots on Lothal—"

"Shut your mouths, leatherneck." The squad leader gestured and the trooper behind him activated a holopad. It projected a blue hologram of the now absent young woman, except instead of the jacket and trousers she wore the garb of a government bureaucrat.

"We have reports this traitor was in the vicinity. Has she come in here?"

Old Jho hesitated, his vein bulging like a tree root. Despite the fact that the woman had robbed them, Lando knew Jho would never risk his reputation and hand someone over to the Empire.

Lando stepped forward to study the hologram. "Who is she?" All blasters immediately turned on him. "Gentlemen, please," he said, using his best placating tone. "I want to help you."

"Identify yourself," ordered the squad leader.

"Name's Lando Calrissian. Recent transplant to Lothal and loyal patriot of the Galactic Empire. You can check my record."

There was a pause as a trooper did just that. For a few seconds, all Lando heard was garbled comm traffic echoing inside the trooper's helmet. He wasn't nervous. His past might not be squeaky clean, but his datafile in the Imperial Security Bureau's computers was. Before he'd come to Lothal, he paid a slicer a princely sum to polish his ISB record to make him seem like a shining paragon of Imperial citizenry.

"He's clear, sir," said the trooper.

The blasters lowered, but only a degree or two. "Her name is Ria Clarr," the squad leader said. "Previously an analyst at the Imperial Mining Institute, until her treasonous activity."

"What'd she do? Steal some files? Embarrass a lieutenant?"

"She deleted the databases for Lothal's geological surveys." The squad leader's blaster lifted again, and the others followed suit. "Where is she?"

"All right, all right, no need to get testy," Lando said, backing away. "Your hologram does resemble a woman I saw in here a few minutes ago. She had a quick drink, then made an exit out the way you entered."

"In what direction did she head?"

"No clue. Wasn't paying that much attention. But if I'd known she was wanted by the Empire, I would've done something. We all would've." Lando prompted Old Jho with a glance.

"Yes, yes," the Ithorian said. "I always report any treasonous activity I see."

The squad leader gave Jho a faceless stare, causing the Ithorian's vein to throb even more. Then the leader turned and walked out of the cantina, his troopers following.

"You're welcome," Lando said to the troopers. They did not respond.

Once the transport sped off, Vizago emerged from the shadows. "I hadn't realized you were so devoted to the Empire, Calrissian."

"I came to Lothal to make my fortune as a miner, not a

trouble-maker," Lando said. "But I also want my winnings. If she'd gone out the way I mentioned, she would've run smack into those stormtroopers before they got here."

Vizago glanced at the rear door, which remained shut. "Then how'd she leave?"

Lando looked to Jho for the answer. "In the kitchen, there's a door to the back lot," the Ithorian said.

Lando scowled. That was where he'd parked his Ubrikkian. And if she'd stolen the pot, she had his keycard.

He hurried through the kitchen, ignoring squeals from the Ugnaught cooks. But by the time he made it to the back lot, the spherical shape of his landspeeder was vanishing into the grasslands.

"Shouldn't have let you slide, Calrissian," Vizago said, coming up behind him.

Lando checked his chrono. It was linked to his speeder's navigation systems, allowing him to scroll through all pertinent information, from velocity to altitude to surrounding traffic and potential destinations. That final bit of data made him shudder.

"Game's not over yet. Warm up your speeder."

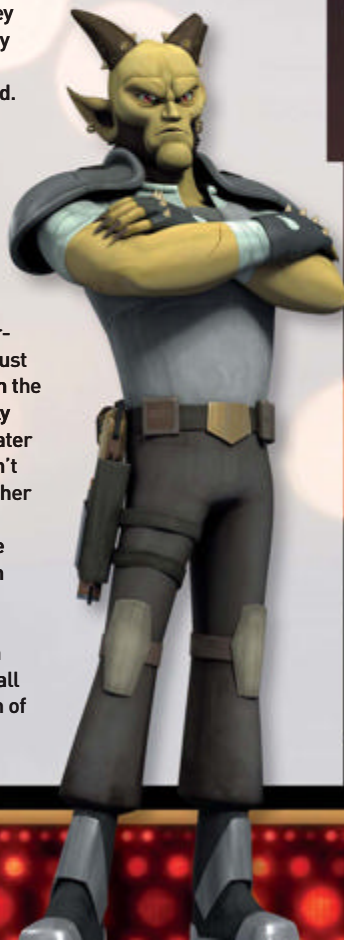
Vizago leaned over his shoulder. "You know where she's going?"

Lando looked up from his chrono. The plains dominated the horizon in all but one dark spot.

Though Tarkintown had received no official Imperial designation other than "Lothal re-settlement camp 43," everyone, even stormtroopers, identified it by its colloquial name. It had come into being when its namesake, Grand Moff Tarkin, had exercised the Empire's right of eminent domain on Lothal and ordered that all land rich in resources be seized for Imperial use. Those dispossessed of their land were forcibly resettled in a place so barren no crops could be cultivated, where even Lothal's ubiquitous grass grew sparse. This made it difficult to find a place to conceal Vizago's speeder. They had to park it a half klick away from the camp and leave the IG-RM droid behind as a guard.

Approaching Tarkintown on foot, Lando observed that it wasn't even a town, per se, but rather a collection of huts and hovels fashioned out of old shipping containers that were all huddled around the spire of a weather-beaten moisture vaporator. Rust had bored huge holes through the vaporator's shell and probably contaminated the drinking water it supplied. It also clearly didn't double as a communal refresher or pump a sanitation system. Coming to the outskirts of the camp, Lando sloshed through sludge he knew wasn't mud. He had to hold his nose—and breath—at times. Tarkintown reeked of filth and trash and all things gone to rot. The stench of extreme poverty.

"Lovely, eh?" Vizago said.



Lando said nothing. His mind was on his farm, only a few klicks away and yet a paradise compared to this. If his puffer pig ever sniffed out ore and his mining venture proved successful enough to hire a crew, he'd make sure he and his people all lived in comfort and peace. He would never be a Tarkintowner.

Lando's chrono directed them to the town's eastern edge, where they spotted the Ubrikkian hovering in standby mode behind a shanty. A man wearing a steel headband stood beside it, pressing Lando's keycard to the circular ports that ringed the capsule. When a hatch opened, the man jumped for joy and crawled inside.

"Hey—"

The noise of the Ubrikkian's micro-thrusters drowned out Lando's protests. Before he could get to the speeder, the man zoomed off into the prairie.

Vizago, meanwhile, went in the opposite direction, hurrying down an alley. Lando glanced one last time at his Ubrikkian, then followed.

In the center of the camp, Ria Clarr stood on the ledge of the moisture vaporator, besieged on all sides by refugees. Rodians, Gran, and humans alike reached and grabbed for the credit chits she doled out from her pocket like confetti.

"That infernal witch—how dare she!" Vizago drew his blaster and fired high into the air. Refugees scattered like Loth-rats, likely fearing an Imperial attack. TIE pilots were known to use the resettlement camps as target practice during patrols.

With the crowd disbanded, Vizago aimed his pistol at Clarr. "What in Malachor are you doing?"

Clarr dropped the few chits she still had and raised her hands in surrender. "Making amends."

"With my credits? I should burn a hole through your heart."

"Your memory is failing, Vizago." Lando strode forward. "I won those credits, so I decide who gets burned and who doesn't. Put the gun down."

"Calrissian, I'm done with your tricks."

Lando walked into the path of Vizago's blaster. "Shoot me or get paid. What'll it be?"

Sneering, the Devaronian lowered his pistol. Lando then faced the woman and studied her for the second time. The strange glint in her eyes he should've recognized. He'd seen it in a number of acquaintances he'd recently made.

He bent down and picked up a credit chit. "Amends for what?"

"For Tarkintown," she said. "I'm the reason this exists."

"That's ridiculous," Vizago said. "Everyone knows Tarkin ordered this camp built."

"Based on my reports," Clarr said. "My research for the Mining Institute concluded that a rich vein of ore lay below these people's farms. I personally convinced the Grand Moff that mining would be worth the effort. At the time, I believed the Empire was a force for good, and would help lift Lothal out of poverty and obscurity."

"What changed your mind?" Lando asked.

"Discovering the lies behind Imperial propaganda. Like most, I was aware this was a poor area, but only when I flew out here for a follow-up survey did I realize how bad conditions had become. For the longest time, I agonized over what to do, knowing I had been complicit in what was happening here. But I was afraid of doing anything myself—I was afraid of what the Empire would do to me—until I heard the Holonet broadcast by that boy, calling everyone to stand up against Imperial tyranny. I thought, if a kid wasn't afraid of defying the Empire, I shouldn't be either."

She was referring to Ezra Bridger, the youngest of those

same acquaintances who had helped Lando acquire his puffer-pig. Not soon after, the group had hacked into the Imperial communications network and spread a message of resistance to anyone with a Holonet receiver.

It was an inspiring message, Lando had to admit. But he preferred to stay out of galactic politics. Dealing with black market gangsters like Vizago caused him enough headaches.

"So you wiped all your research and fled Capital City," Lando said. "But why stop at Old Jho's? There are better places to hide in than in a sabacc game."

"She wanted the credits!" Vizago said.

Clarr shook her head. "The sabacc pot was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. But I came to Old Jho's searching for someone like you," she said, looking at Lando.

"You need the services of a gambler?" Vizago asked.

"A rebel."

Lando chuckled and gave her the same generous smile he'd given a thousand ladies whom he'd refused for one reason or another. "I'm humbled by your request, truly. But revolution is the one game I don't play."

"That's what I once thought," Clarr said, "but if you don't get involved, it's a game you're going to lose."

Lando's chrono beeped. He glanced at his wrist. The tracker showed his Ubrikkian had turned around and was traveling toward Tarkintown at high velocity. A second icon blinked behind it in pursuit and was gaining so fast, Lando didn't need to enlarge it to know what it was.

"I recommend hiding your true colors at the moment. We're about to have company," Lando said, "of the Imperial kind."

The ping of lasers punctuated his warning. Speeding toward them from the west was Lando's Ubrikkian, with its aft section on fire. The man with the steel headband sat in the cockpit, turned upside down as the craft spun and arrowed right toward the camp.

Lando dove to the ground for cover.

Seconds later, the man's joyride ended in a ground-shaking crash.

A scorching wave of heat passed over Lando, singeing his clothes and his back. He held his breath until he couldn't any longer, waiting for the smoke to clear.

Finally he stood, coughing. Other than some minor burns, he'd suffered no injuries. His Ubrikkian, however, had experienced a horrible mechanical death. It lay twisted around the moisture vaporator, pieces of its fuselage strewn about. The man in the cockpit did not move.

"You again," said a familiar, filtered voice.

The stormtrooper squad leader leaned out of the hatch of the Imperial troop transport as it emerged from the smoke. He leapt down to the ground, joined by two troopers. All aimed their blaster rifles at Lando and Vizago, and were backed up by the transport's forward laser turrets.

"Why, hello," Lando said, regaining his breath.

"We should get a drink sometime, seeing we run in the same circles."

"Where is she?" the squad leader barked.

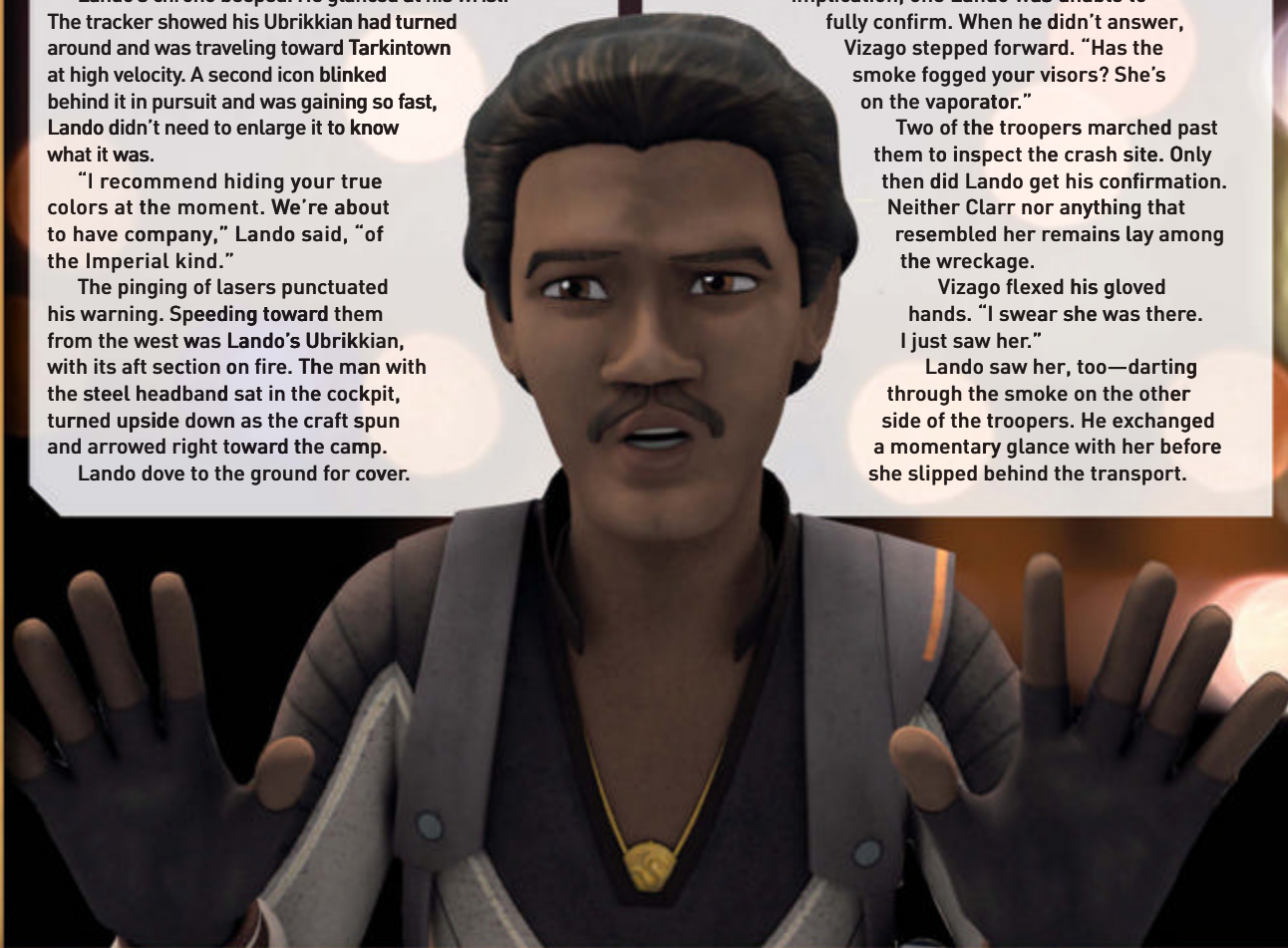
The question carried with it a certain implication, one Lando was unable to fully confirm. When he didn't answer, Vizago stepped forward. "Has the smoke fogged your visors? She's on the vaporator."

Two of the troopers marched past them to inspect the crash site. Only then did Lando get his confirmation. Neither Clarr nor anything that resembled her remains lay among the wreckage.

Vizago flexed his gloved hands. "I swear she was there. I just saw her."

Lando saw her, too—darting through the smoke on the other side of the troopers. He exchanged a momentary glance with her before she slipped behind the transport.

THE STORMTROOPER SQUAD LEADER LEANED OUT OF THE HATCH OF THE IMPERIAL TROOP TRANSPORT AS IT EMERGED FROM THE SMOKE. HE LEAPT DOWN TO THE GROUND, JOINED BY TWO TROOPERS. ALL AIMED THEIR BLASTER RIFLES AT LANDO AND VIZAGO.



The two troopers returned to their commander, pressing their rifle barrels into Vizago and Lando's sides. "If you don't tell us the truth we will tear this town apart," the squad leader said, "after we reduce you to ash."

The Devaronian hissed at Lando, as if ready to bite. "Tell him—tell him that was the truth!"

Lando stared at the squad leader, focusing on the helmet's curved lenses, which concealed the trooper's real eyes. Though Lando couldn't get a read on those eyes, he reminded himself that they were there, that beneath the white plastoid armor there was a person, regardless of how faceless and robotic he or she seemed. And people could be bluffed.

"Order your troopers to lower their rifles and I'll tell you where she is."

The squad leader leaned close to Lando. "We don't bargain with scum. This is your last chance."

Lando couldn't see Clarr, but he had to trust to luck that she knew what she was doing. All he had to do was keep the troopers' attention off the transport for a couple more moments. "That wouldn't be smart, sir. My partner and I are worth more alive than dead." He put on his most serious sabacc face. "You see, we're rebels."

Rebels. That single word proved incendiary. They ignited the squad leader's eyes under the lenses, widening their pupils, making them at last visible. Lando had never seen such hate.

"What? I'm not a rebel," Vizago said. "He's lying, I tell you, he's lying!"

"Stuncuff them," the squad leader said. "We will bring them to Agent Kallus for—"

A laser blast cut short the squad leader's order. He was pitched forward into Lando, and both smacked the ground. Lando rolled to his knees, but the squad leader remained face down, a gaping hole in his back.

The two other troopers whirled and opened fire on the transport. The body of the transport pilot dangled out the hatch, yet the transport's forward turrets continued to move. Clarr must have infiltrated the vehicle and taken control of its weaponry.

But managing two targets proved difficult for someone unskilled in military tech. Her next rounds missed. The stormtroopers didn't. They concentrated their fire through the transport's open hatch. Within seconds, its turrets stopped rotating.

The troopers re-trained their rifles on Lando and Vizago. "You'll pay for this, rebel scum," both said.

Lando waited for the inevitable blaster bolt to come. There was no way to bluff out of this one.

A rock struck one of the troopers' helmets. Surprised, the trooper and his comrade wheeled around—into a hailstorm. Refugees came out of their hovels and threw whatever objects they had at hand, from bent hydrosplanners to shattered glowrods. While most everything bounced harmlessly off the troopers' armor, the impact was enough to take them off their feet. They never got back up. The refugees descended upon the troopers, their fear replaced by a seething fury. The crackle of nerf-prods silenced the troopers' screams, but the refugees continued their attack. They would have their revenge.

Lando hastened away from the mob, heading toward the Imperial transport. He dreaded what he would find in there, but he had to go. Clarr had risked her life to save his, so he owed it to her to see if there was any chance he could save hers.

The stormtroopers' shots had turned the interior of the transport into a smoldering ruin. Cockpit consoles sizzled. Live conduits sparked. The piloting yoke hung from a rope of melted wire, while the gunnery controls were nothing but a blackened mess.

On the floor in the middle of all this lay Ria Clarr.

Lando stepped over to her and bent down to inspect her wounds. She'd been hit in the hip and abdomen, painful for sure, but not necessarily lethal. His dread edged to hope.

"Ria?"

When she opened her eyes and looked up at him, he offered her his most rakish grin. "Not bad for a geologist."

The glint in her eyes shone even brighter than before. "Not bad for a rebel," she said to him.

On the boarding ramp of the *Broken Horn*, Lando looked back one last time at Tarkintown. The place was nothing like the desolate camp of his arrival. Refugees hurried about between the hovels, arming themselves with blasters from the troop transport or fashioning crude weapons of their own. Directing all this was Ria Clarr, confined to a repulsor sled because of her injuries, but no less deterred in her fight against the Empire.

Lando sighed. He had pleaded with them—he'd *begged* Clarr—to board Vizago's freighter and leave Lothal, explaining that the Empire would be back in full force and wouldn't take prisoners. But no one would be swayed, least of all Clarr. Her act of resistance and the resulting victory over the stormtroopers had shaken these people out of their doldrums, given them a purpose, inspired them. Yes, Tarkintown might be a wretched, miserable place to live, but it was their home. And they would defend it, to the death if need be.

Clarr drove her sled near the ramp. She gave him a look and a smile. "Thank you. For everything."

"Sure," Lando said, unable to muster a smile of his own. "Good luck."

Entering the freighter, he almost felt guilty he wasn't staying behind. But the truth was, Tarkintown wasn't his home, and the Empire wasn't his enemy. Not yet, at least. And if that day did come to pass, one thing was certain: Lando Calrissian wouldn't count on his luck. Wise gamblers knew when to double-down, and when *not* to, particularly if the odds were stacked so heavily against them, as they would be with the Empire.

The *Broken Horn* took off, piloted by Vizago's enforcer droids. The plan Lando had hatched with Vizago called for them to be safely off Lothal for a couple weeks, so they wouldn't be swept up in any Imperial investigation.

"Hide my cache of transponders in the shed and remember to walk the puffer-pig," Lando told his protocol droid, W1-LE, over the comm. "I want her sniffing for ore."

He shut off his comlink and stood alone in the main cabin. In the viewport, Tarkintown diminished in size until it was just another light on Lothal's surface. Soon it wasn't even that.

Vizago came up beside him. "You still owe me for that land, Calrissian."

Lando fingered the few credits he had left in his pocket, the ones he hadn't bet. They weren't much, but perhaps they'd be enough, if he was lucky.

"Sabacc?" 🎲

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OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

THE MAKING OF DARK EMPIRE – PART II

BY MICHAEL KOGGE

INSIDER CONTINUES ITS LOOK BACK AT THE ICONIC COMIC SERIES FROM THE EARLY 1990S.

Right: Dave Dorman's iconic cover art for issue #2 showed a darker side to Luke Skywalker.

Opposite Page: Limited edition prints showcasing Cam Kennedy's stunning art.

Dark Empire is beloved by Star Wars fans as the comic book epic that tells how Luke Skywalker followed in his father's footsteps and turned, for a brief but galaxy-shaking moment, to the dark side of the Force. But what few fans know is that when writer Tom Veitch and Scottish artist Cam Kennedy first pitched their idea to Lucasfilm, it was for a prequel to the original trilogy, not a sequel. Veitch called it *The Jedi Chronicles*.

"Our first ambition is to examine the period between the first and second trilogies, when Darth Vader rose to preeminence as 'Dark Lord of the Sith.' We are told that it was during this 20 year span following the Clone Wars that Vader, 'hunted down and exterminated the remaining Jedi'—all except Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi," Veitch wrote in his proposal of December 2, 1988. "We would want to focus on the greatness of the martyred Masters, their wise and ingenious use of the Force, their awesome exploits against the Empire, and ultimately, their heroic deaths. Our book would end on an upbeat note, with Obi-Wan Kenobi watching young Luke Skywalker from afar, prophesying Luke's role in the struggle and victories yet to come."





Lucasfilm's director of publishing at that time, Lucy Wilson, rejected Veitch's proposal on the grounds that it might interfere with a prequel film trilogy George Lucas was considering making. She suggested an alternative timeline—why not *continue* the adventures of Luke Skywalker, after the events of *Return of the Jedi*? This would give Veitch and Kennedy carte blanche to do what they wanted, without worrying about contradicting future films. The two agreed on Wilson's timeline and commenced work on what would be the first sequel to the original film trilogy—in any form—since the days of the Marvel *Star Wars* comic, and a full year before author Timothy Zahn signed a contract to write his *Heir to the Empire* novel.

For Veitch, this was a dream project. He'd been a big fan of *Star Wars* since the 1970s, and often found himself imagining his own "tales of the Jedi" long after *Return of the Jedi* had left theaters. Veitch also realized this would be a difficult and demanding project, one which would require much thought and preparation to do it right. Though he had written underground comix and avant-garde novels in the 1970s, *Star Wars* delivered a different—and potentially much bigger—audience than his previous readership.

And while the galaxy of far, far away might have faded from mainstream popular culture, it still remained *the* galaxy of far, far away. No space fantasy film had eclipsed the success of the *Star Wars* trilogy, and its oft-quoted salutation—"May the Force be with you"—was forever part of American culture.

The Force would most definitely need to be with Veitch for his dream project to come to completion through the struggles that ensued.

THE LIGHT AND DARKNESS WAR

Reflecting on the origins of *Dark Empire*, it seems astonishing that Lucasfilm would hand over the keys to the *Star Wars* universe to a writer and artist who weren't yet household names among comic book fans in America. Although Kennedy had an enormous résumé across the pond in British comics, the most popular title he'd drawn was *Judge Dredd*, which was barely known in the States. Veitch had achieved success in bohemian circles and the San Francisco underground comix scene, but he supported his family by selling

antiquarian books and teaching the works of Carl Jung.

What connected both of these men—and perhaps what convinced Lucasfilm—was a passion for visual storytelling that wasn't beholden to current industry standards. Both men were rebels of sorts—Veitch the iconoclastic poet, Kennedy the wanderlust painter, each of who endeavored to break new ground in their creative work, despite commercial demands. Yet with Kennedy located in Scotland, and Veitch in Vermont, their collaboration—and thus *Dark Empire*—never would have happened if not for mutual friend and comic book veteran, Steve Bissette.

In the mid-1980s, Kennedy visited Bissette in Vermont and told him of an image he couldn't get out of his mind. He'd done a couple drawings, but was looking for a writer to help develop the idea. "It was of a Second World War bomber coming back from a raid over Germany and it goes through a timewarp, and then it finds itself on a parallel warrior plain somewhere on Earth," Kennedy says. "It's a weapon these warriors fighting below on the plain have never seen before."

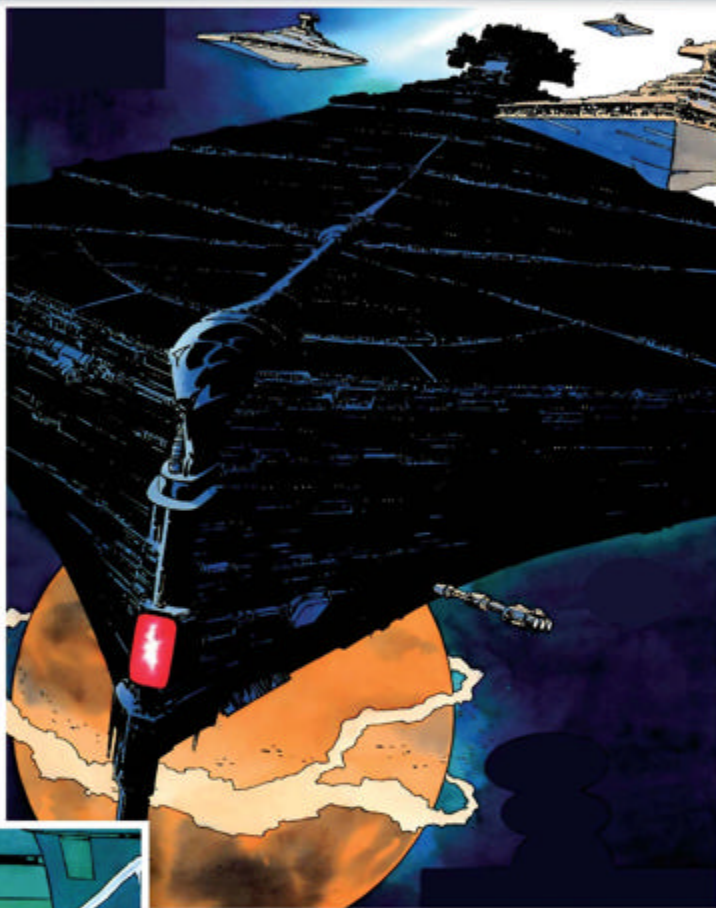
Bissette told Kennedy he knew someone who could be a good collaborator and invited writer pal Tom Veitch over

From top, this page: Luke takes on the cloned Emperor; the Empire's impressive battleship, the *Eclipse*; Kennedy's art conveys a strong sense of movement, bringing the climactic lightsaber duel to life.

Opposite page, from left: A shocking image from *Dark Empire* as Luke kneels before the Emperor; *The Light and Darkness War*'s Lazarus Jones proved to be an influential protagonist.

for dinner one evening. The two clicked instantly, and when Kennedy mentioned his idea, Veitch showed him a treatment for a similar multi-dimensional war story he'd been developing for several years. This serendipity resulted in what would be one of the most well-regarded comic book series of the 1980s, *The Light and Darkness War*. Epic Comics, a creator-owned imprint at Marvel under the supervision of editor Archie Goodwin, published the six issue series written by Veitch and illustrated by Kennedy, to great acclaim. The series was no wham-pow superhero saga, but a moving story about a crippled veteran of the Vietnam war, Lazarus Jones, who is transported into another universe and finds a new life leading a war against the evil Lord Na and his Deadsiders.

"Where did I get the idea for *The Light and Darkness War*? Frankly, it came out of my 'religious experiences' of years earlier, but also from reading Jung and learning his method of exploring the unconscious psyche. He was a very, very smart man—another Obi-Wan to me!" Veitch says. "Speaking of which, in those days everybody had been taken over by the *Star Wars*



movies. So my imagination said to me, 'We can invent our own science-fiction universe, where there is good and evil, technology, war, and interesting characters—a big landscape of the imagination where just about anything we can think of can happen.'

"Vietnam came into it, because I was all too aware that thousands of men of my generation had gone there and died. The Vietnam Memorial—with its 50,000 names—had opened in 1982. Oliver Stone's film *Platoon* had been released in 1986, shortly before I met Cam. I had been hung up on the war for a long time, doing several comix stories about it with [legendary underground cartoonist] Greg Irons."

Readers familiar with *Dark Empire* will observe many parallels with *The Light and Darkness War*. Kennedy's trademark watercolor style is on full display, and many of the background characters in each series

could be substituted without revision. The stories, too, share similar connections on the mythological level. “*Star Wars* has the Jedi, who are warrior-masters of the light. *The Light and Darkness War* has the Menteps, who are these curious aliens, not really human, who live in a kind of ongoing state of mystical rapport with ‘the Source,’ which is pure light and consciousness—equivalent to God, in Christian terms,” Veitch says.

“*Star Wars* also has the Emperor, a Master of the dark side of the Force. We have Lord Na, who as a personality is nothing like the Emperor, but who is evil incarnate. He’s also a kind of send-up of the Marvel super-villains. He’s really stuck on himself, spouts arrogant bombast, and is surrounded by groveling sychophants—kind of like a modern politician!”

The influence of *The Light and Darkness War* reached well beyond Veitch and Kennedy’s next project, *Dark Empire*. The term for Lord Na’s undead

minions, the “Deadsiders”—a word Veitch attributes to William Burroughs and Eric Frank Russell—has in turn been appropriated by television shows and role-playing games. Most notably, the series inspired director James Cameron to turn the hero of his blockbuster film *Avatar*, Jake Scully, into a paraplegic like Lazarus Jones.

FROM LAZARUS TO LUKE

After seeing the issues of *The Light and Darkness War* Veitch sent as samples, George Lucas—a comic book enthusiast—gave his blessing that Veitch and Kennedy could proceed with a *Star Wars* comic book series in Kennedy’s fully painted style. Veitch ran with Wilson’s advice that they go into the future rather than the past and quickly generated a new pitch. On the proposal’s first page, Veitch put forward a bold request: that the villain of the comic

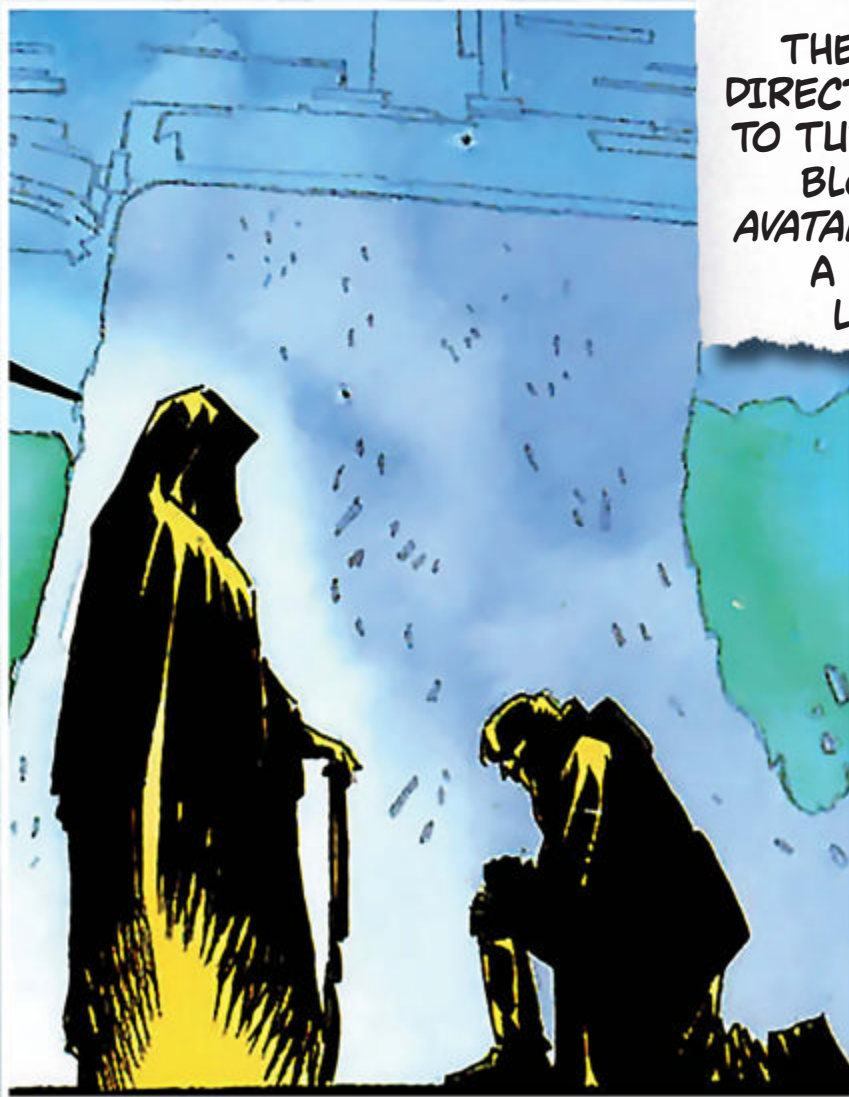


THE SERIES INSPIRED DIRECTOR JAMES CAMERON TO TURN THE HERO OF HIS BLOCKBUSTER FILM AVATAR, JAKE SCULLY, INTO A PARAPLEGIC LIKE LAZARUS JONES.

book series should be the supreme Master of the dark side from the films, Emperor Palpatine.

Veitch posited many theories as to how the Emperor survived being flung into the Death Star’s reactor, including one that he was not flesh-and-blood at all, but a machine. Perhaps most adventurous was imagining that the Emperor seen in the films was actually possessed by an evil alien intelligence. “This entity would probably come from outside the galaxy, and it would have a parasitical relationship to the Force,” Veitch wrote at the time, and “its political subversion of the Republic (through the agency of Palpatine), would be part of a plan to transform the galaxy into a massive anthheap society, with itself at the center. (The anthheap image was suggested by the red-helmeted Imperial Guards, who made us think of red soldier ants.)”

But what best fit the story—and matched the reference to the “Clone

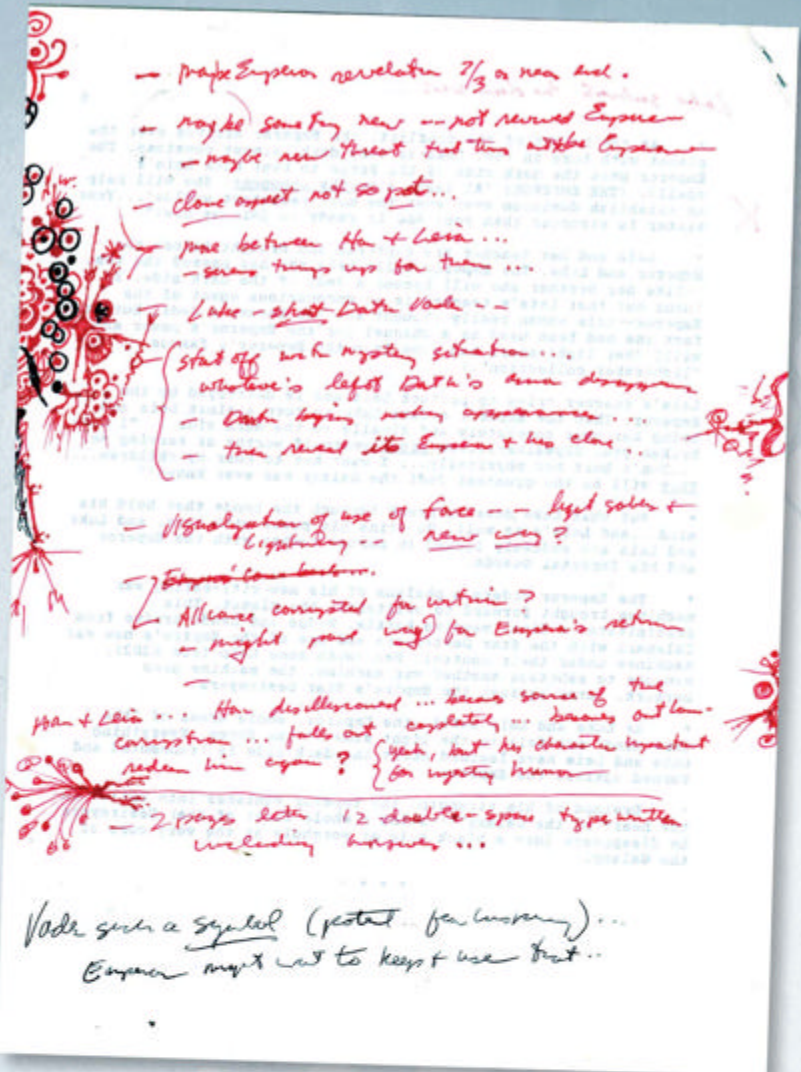


Wars" in *Star Wars*—was Veitch's idea that the Emperor found a way to survive by transferring his life force at the moment of annihilation into the bodies of younger clones. Palpatine's ultimate goal in the series would be to take possession of the body (and soul) of his arch-nemesis, the last of the Jedi, Luke Skywalker. This is the pitch Lucasfilm approved, and would tie in so well with the continuity of the prequels. In what might be the strongest link between the films and former "Expanded Universe" material developed by outside authors, George Lucas later used an iteration of this idea in *Revenge of the Sith*, when Darth Sidious reveals to Anakin Skywalker that if they work together, they could learn the dark side secret of subverting death.

THE RETURN OF ARCHIE GOODWIN

Veitch did not work alone in shaping the story of *Dark Empire*. Before he sent his proposal to Wilson, he bounced ideas off Kennedy and their *Light and Darkness* editor at Marvel Epic, Archie Goodwin, who had logged years exploring the *Star Wars* universe. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Goodwin wrote the *Star Wars* daily syndicated comic for newspapers with artist Al Williamson, while also editing and writing more than 30 issues of Marvel's *Star Wars* monthly comic (see *Insider* 148 for a profile on Goodwin). No one in comics knew how to capture the spirit of *Star Wars* better than Goodwin, and it was for this reason that Veitch called Goodwin "Mr. *Star Wars*."

Working with Goodwin on *The Light and Darkness War* was, for Cam Kennedy, one of, "the highlights of my life." Editor and artist struck up a fast friendship, with Goodwin and his wife often hosting Kennedy in New York, and Goodwin visiting Kennedy at his home on a remote Scottish isle.



This page, from above: Tom Veitch's detailed notes; Veitch's script featured intriguing new information about the Jedi.

Opposite page, from left: A haunting image of Luke; one of Kennedy's spectacular battle scenes that would be recognized as one of the artist's many trademarks.

"He was very, very encouraging," Kennedy remembers of Goodwin. "When I drew out the first episode of *Light and Darkness*, he just liked it right away. He said, 'Keep firing off, this is great stuff, Cam.'"

Goodwin immediately warmed to Veitch and Kennedy's pitch for an adult, graphic novel version of *Star Wars* and said it would find a good home at Marvel Epic. Given this interest from a major publisher, on December 30, 1988, Veitch sent Goodwin his nine-page proposal and they batted it around, with Goodwin suggesting plot points of his own. "Archie came up with the idea that the Empire would put somebody else inside Vader's costume, to inspire fear throughout the galaxy," Veitch says.

With Goodwin's feedback, Veitch revised the proposal and sent it to Lucasfilm. Lucy Wilson approved Veitch to begin writing the scripts with one exception: "Anything to do directly with Vader was out. 'George is working on a prequel,'" Veitch recalls. "Meaning, I guess, that he didn't want us to contradict anything he might do with Vader in the prequels. She did say it was okay to use a 'training hologram' featuring Vader. And yes, it was okay to work from likenesses of the actors."

Veitch started writing, Kennedy started drawing, and all seemed well for *Star Wars* to make a triumphant return in comics. Then in May 1989, Archie Goodwin left



Marvel for a job at DC, and the new Epic editor didn't share Goodwin's enthusiasm for *Star Wars*. A year later, with the art for issue one completed, the publishing contracts still weren't finalized, and Veitch was doing all he could to keep Kennedy from moving onto other paying projects.

Dark Empire was suddenly in serious jeopardy.

To be concluded...

MORE TO SAY

Dark Empire is available from Marvel.

The Light and Darkness War is out now.

Follow **Michael Kogge** online at www.michaelkogge.com or on twitter @michaelkogge.

HAVE YOU?

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING JAR JAR

THE HAPLESS GUNGAN MIGHT BE ONE OF *STAR WARS*' MOST CONTROVERSIAL CHARACTERS, BUT HE IS ALSO ONE OF ITS MOST CRUCIAL. BRYAN YOUNG INVESTIGATES.



One of the things I love most about the *Star Wars* saga is that everything is cyclical. Its themes move from one installment to the next, each idea being refined, each episode adding nuance to the previous one. The best moments in *Star Wars* are those that build on each other and force you to reevaluate everything you've seen before. When you see how Anakin's trials in the prequels so closely mirror Luke's in the original trilogy, it's a wonderful juxtaposition. We see the spiritual nature of the Force trump technology in each episode, turning it in a slightly different direction every time. Perhaps my favorite evolution of a fairy tale element in *Star Wars* is the one that begins with Jar Jar Binks and ends with victory on Endor.

For many people who have watched the films repeatedly, the cycle might not be the most apparent, but watching the films in the order that starts with *The Phantom Menace* and ends with *Return of the Jedi*, it's quite plain to see the threads George Lucas was weaving together throughout the tapestry of the *Star Wars* saga. Taken as a whole, it's obvious that without Jar Jar's place in *The Phantom Menace*, the rebellion would never have been able to destroy the Empire or make the battle of Endor a decisive victory.

In order to illustrate this, we need to go back to *The Phantom Menace*. Throughout the film, Jar Jar is treated like a lower life form, called annoying, and sentenced to death (or at least torture) for his clumsiness. Obi-Wan Kenobi,

someone tasked with being a guardian of peace and justice, even refers to him as "pathetic." No one sees the inherent worth in our favorite Gungan clown until Qui-Gon Jinn, a Jedi with a penchant for the unorthodox and an ear for the living Force, saves Jar Jar's life when the Jedi need a guide.

"Nothing happens by accident," Qui-Gon teaches us, and Jar Jar Binks joining Queen Amidala's entourage is certainly no accident. He meets the Queen while she is disguised as her handmaiden Padmé, who seems to have never even met a Gungan before. "You're a Gungan, aren't you?" she asks. "Uh huh," he replies innocently.

For societies that rely heavily upon each other, they



don't seem to know much about one another, and this is the first step taken to bridge that gap and bring them together. It's something that would have never happened if Qui-Gon hadn't taken pity on the clown.

The next step happens on Tatooine, after the Queen's ship makes an emergency landing. Qui-Gon is on the lookout for hyperdrive parts and Jar Jar tags along, hoping to stay out of trouble. After thinking with his stomach and trying to steal a chuba from an outdoor vendor in Mos Espa, Jar Jar draws the ire of an especially dangerous Dug named Sebulba. This fight between Gungan and Dug, interrupted by Anakin, acts as the catalyst to bring Qui-Gon and Padmé into the home of the young slave boy—and is key to the whole story.

Through their trials on Tatooine and Coruscant, it's Qui-Gon's treatment of Jar Jar that serves as an example for Padmé when she's formulating her plan to take back her home planet. Though Jar Jar was met by a collective shrug by everyone, save Qui-Gon, the Queen sees that Jar Jar is the key to bringing together the Gungans and the Naboo once and for all. With the Gungan clown uniting the two races of the planet Naboo, they are able to eject the Trade Federation and restore freedom to Naboo for as long as they can foresee.

It's a lesson George Lucas was keen to repeat through the *Star Wars* films, and a story as old as our world's mythology. In the behind the scenes documentary *From Star Wars to Jedi*, Lucas remarks



Main image:
Jar Jar Binks: On first impressions a buffoon, but does he have a lesson to teach the heroes?

Opposite page:
Jar Jar and Boss Nass; the Gungan on the battlefield.



to Mark Hamill on the set of *Return of the Jedi*, "In a fairy tale, it's always being nice to the bunny rabbit on the side of the road that gives you the magic that let's you go and get the princess from the evil witch."

That's exactly what's put into motion in *The Phantom Menace*, but sometimes it can be used to much darker ends. It's a lesson that's turned on its head in *Attack of the Clones*, when Palpatine uses Padmé's plan in reverse, manipulating Jar Jar into initiating a motion that grants him emergency powers to create the Grand Army of the Republic.

It's a certainty that Yoda watches these events unfold and seems to deconstruct the importance of these lessons and the need for humility among the Jedi. At one point, Yoda remarks to Obi-Wan and Mace Windu on the increased arrogance of the Jedi, even the older and more experienced ones.

That arrogance is what ultimately leads to their downfall. They've become warriors rather than keepers of the peace and friends of the underdogs. With the death of Qui-Gon Jinn, they lose the renegade example of humility and trust in the Living Force that he set.

As the galaxy falls into the grip of the Empire, Yoda exiles himself to Dagobah. While he's there on Dagobah, tapping into the Force and watching the movements of the galaxy, it's an echo of the subliminal lessons taught by Jar Jar that Yoda uses to first test Luke Skywalker in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Pretending to be that bunny on the side of the road, Yoda fools Luke into thinking he's helpless. It's a test of his worthiness as a Jedi, and Luke fails. Miserably. The young Skywalker is frustrated with the poor creature who turns out to be the last surviving Jedi Master in the galaxy.

"I cannot teach him," Yoda sighs. "Too much anger in him. Like his father."

This lesson, passed down from Jar Jar to Yoda, is now instilled in Luke. By the time of the events of *Return of the Jedi*, Luke is now an expert in expecting the unexpected from the least likely of sources. He has also learned the humility that the Jedi could have used to prevent their ultimate destruction during Order 66.

The themes echo in reverse once we arrive on Endor. Just as Jar Jar had done to the chuba vendor, Chewbacca falls into a trap by thinking with *his* stomach. This sucks all of our heroes into a netted trap left by the aggressive, but seemingly harmless Ewoks.

After R2-D2 cuts them free and the heroes of the Rebellion fall to the ground, the Ewoks swarm and we see Han Solo raise his blaster, ready to defend himself. His first instinct is almost the same as Luke's on Dagobah, albeit more violent.

Fortunately, Master Yoda has taught Luke well and he knows how this test plays out. That's why Luke stops Han, staying the

QUI-GON'S TREATMENT OF JAR JAR SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE FOR PADMÉ WHEN SHE'S FORMULATING HER PLAN TO TAKE BACK HER HOME PLANET.



smuggler's hand. "You'll be all right," the Jedi assures his two comrades. "Chewie, give 'em your crossbow."

And although it's not apparent to anyone else at first, the same way no one thought bringing Jar Jar along would be important, surrendering to the Ewoks was an important step the rebellion was able to take in order to destroy the Empire. Though they're underestimated at every turn, the Ewoks' role in the battle mirrors that of the Gungans on Naboo. They fight with the best tools at their disposal to smash the Imperial engines of war. Han still finds them annoying, though, confident the Ewoks have ruined their plans on the way into the bunker. Doubly so when a brave little Ewok named Paploo decides to steal a speeder bike. "Well, there goes our surprise attack."

But Captain Solo quickly changes his tune when the Ewok's foolhardy plan works, leaving only one scout

trooper to guard the bunker. "Not bad for a little furball. There's only one left."

The Ewoks are the greatest allies the rebellion could have asked for in those circumstances and it's the lesson handed down from Qui-Gon and Jar Jar to Yoda and Luke that provides the rebellion with that victory against the Empire. Not giving in to the lure of violence against "lower" life forms is the only reason they're able to win the day. Even Palpatine, the master manipulator of the Republic, disregards them and can't imagine they could interfere with his plans—his own arrogance blinding him as the Jedi were blinded before.

Watching the films and keeping in mind their circular and evolutionary nature reveals new things with every viewing. That's what I love about *Star Wars*—it always has new lessons to be learned and everything is deliberate.

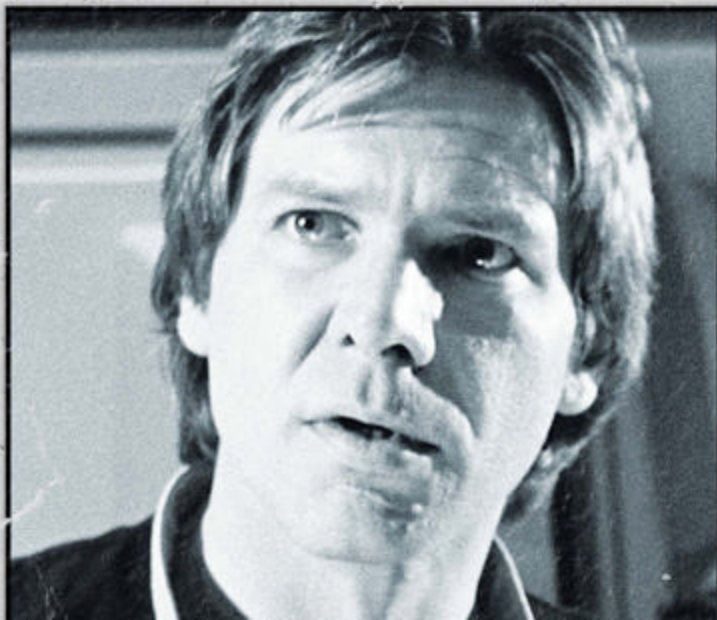
And that's why I can't wait to see how *The Force Awakens* builds on these themes and motifs and takes us into a new era of *Star Wars*. 🍌

Clockwise, from opposite page, top: Obi-Wan learns a vital lesson in not underestimating seemingly inferior species as the Jedi meet Jar Jar; who knew this guy would become a key player in galactic politics! Senator Binks amongst some of the key players on Coruscant; panic on Naboo as the Trade Federation begins its invasion!



SOLO JOURNEY

CONTINUING HER STUDY OF HEROIC JOURNEYS
THROUGH *STAR WARS*, **TRICIA BARR** TAKES A
SHOT AT HAN SOLO, THE HERO WHO RAN OFF
WITH MANY FANS' HEARTS.





While exploring the thematic power of two of *Star Wars*' most iconic characters, Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, earlier this year, I evaluated how the duality of their internal struggles is integral to their effectiveness as hero and villain. They represent good and evil, hope and hopelessness, selfishness and selflessness. Similar to Chinese yin-yang philosophy, these opposing vectors do not exist in isolation. This is why we see the potential for Luke to fall and how it is possible for Darth Vader to be redeemed.

The elements of selfishness and selflessness were also mapped into *Star Wars* through the opposing character types of Luke Skywalker, the selfless idealist, and Han Solo, the jaded, selfish rogue. Throughout his misadventures within *A New Hope*, the smuggler is seemingly motivated by the potential payout that will remove his marker with gangster Jabba the Hutt. His path to heroism is one that he stumbles upon accidentally, rather than through a grander notion of destiny or birthright.

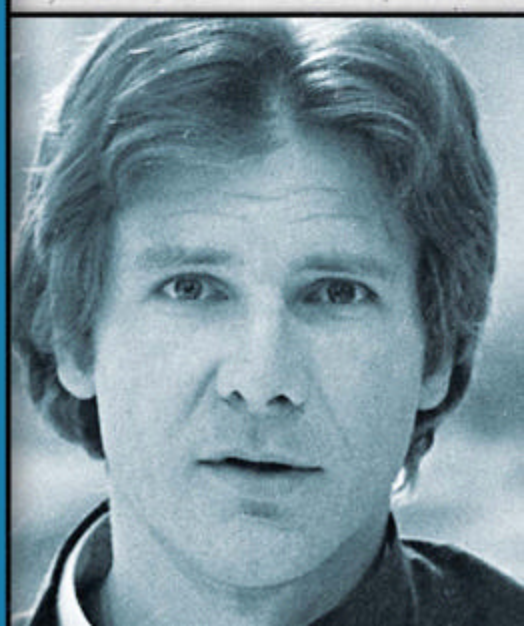
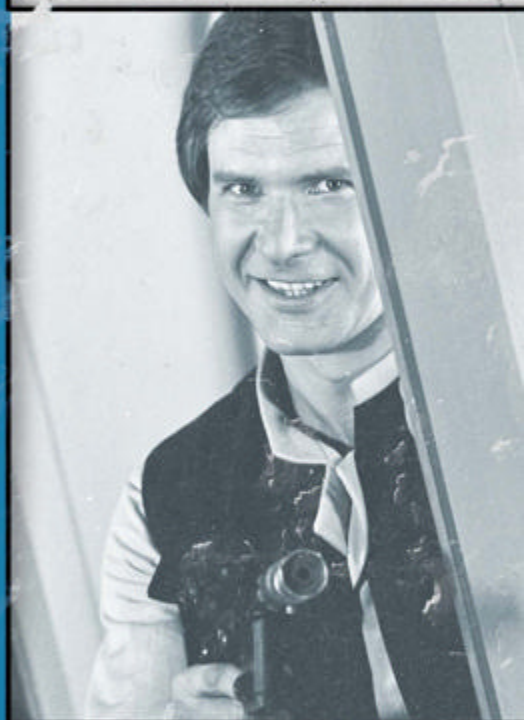
It is remarkable, then, that *Star Wars*' accidental hero is considered in some circles to be a better character than its central protagonist. The American Film Institute celebrated one hundred years of film by compiling several top-100 lists, including one of Heroes and Villains in 2003 that placed Han Solo at #14 and Obi-Wan at #37. Han Solo might rankle a bit earning only #7 on *Entertainment Weekly's* 2009 list of 20 All-Time Coolest Heroes In Pop Culture. In 2010, *Empire Magazine's* 100

**"HAN SOLO IS THAT CHARACTER THAT
WE WISHED WE COULD BE."
—PETER JACKSON**

Greatest Movie Characters list featured Darth Vader at #2, Han Solo at #4, and Luke Skywalker at #54. Some might say Han just gets better with age. In the *Star Wars* Trilogy DVD, director Peter Jackson posited the scoundrel's popularity when he said, "Han Solo is that character that we always wished we could be. I think most of us felt like Luke Skywalker, but we would have loved to have been Han Solo."

AN ACTOR WITH CHARACTER

The storyteller and former stage performer in me prefers to distinguish actors from the roles they have played when considering the legacy of a character. When it comes to Han Solo, though, it is difficult to do. While speaking with Schmoes Know Movies Show podcast earlier this year, Mark Hamill noted that George Lucas casts to type. For anyone who has witnessed Hamill's earnest sincerity and Carrie Fisher's sardonic wit play out live, it is not hard to see the typecasting. When writing character synopses for Luke and Leia for the definitive guide *Ultimate Star Wars*, I wasn't drawn to thinking about Hamill's or Fisher's effect on the character, although I do think they had some. In preparation for this piece in my ongoing series on heroic journeys, I performed my usual research: reading as much as I could find on the character, listening to



interviews that discuss his characterization, considering Han Solo's overarching role in the franchise, and rewatching the original trilogy.

During my Solo-specific rewatch, the nuances that make Han so endearing became evident, and they weren't for reasons similar to Leia or Luke. For a character who doesn't enter the picture until the second act of *A New Hope* and participates minimally in its third act, Han carries a considerable amount of the movie's emotional theme. Some of that comes from the storytelling dynamics of the screenplay, but in watching his scenes in isolation I found that it was often the things that weren't scripted that were most effective in creating a connection with the character.

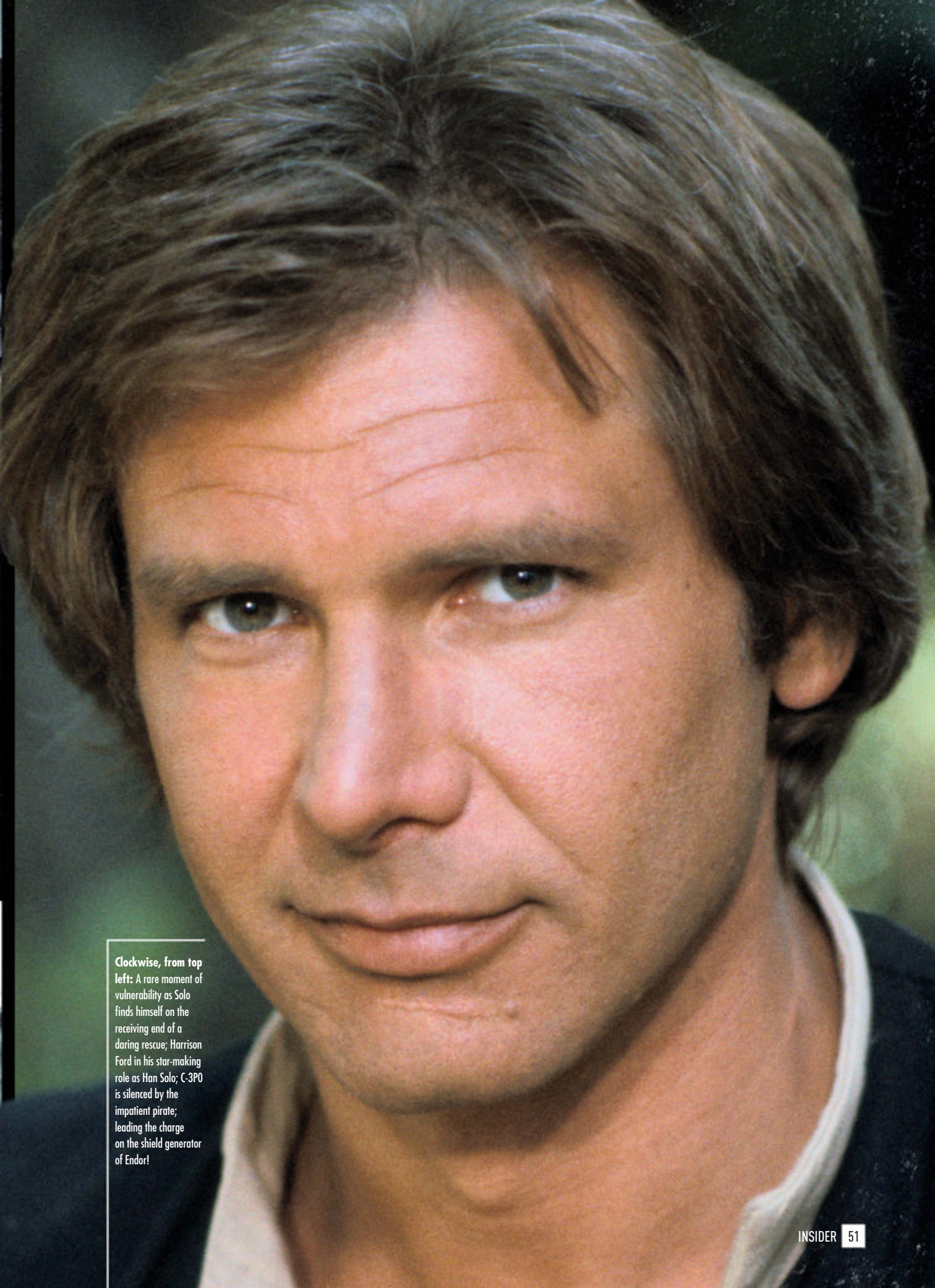
Han's character description in the third draft of *A New Hope's* screenplay calls for a "James Dean-style starpilot," likening him to the real-life movie star rebel who served as a cultural icon of social isolation. During a Q&A following the 30th anniversary screening of *The Empire Strikes Back*, Harrison Ford commented that his character, "Probably represented

THERE IS HAN, IN THE MIDDLE OF EPISODE IV, POINTING OUT THE IMPROBABILITY OF IT ALL!

close to the audience's sensibility, because of his distance from the mythology, because of his resistance to the mythology." Perhaps Jackson and Ford are on to something. While not a Force user, Han is the character who fulfills our predisposition for wish-fulfillment. As a child, I found myself drawn to Luke and Leia, yet as an adult I find their arcs are less realistic. Children don't question if a young man can hop in an X-wing and fly into battle, let alone defeat a Death Star. Yet there is Han, in the middle of Episode IV, pointing out the improbability of it all: "Traveling through hyperspace ain't like dusting crops, boy. Without precise calculations we could fly right through a star or bounce too close to a supernova, and that'd end your trip real quick, wouldn't it?"

Han Solo's legacy as a movie icon stands out when considering the relevance of heroic characters to the timeframe they are created in, specifically the audience that will relate to those heroes. In the era of the original trilogy's debut, cynicism was high and Hollywood





Clockwise, from top left: A rare moment of vulnerability as Solo finds himself on the receiving end of a daring rescue; Harrison Ford in his star-making role as Han Solo; C-3PO is silenced by the impatient pirate; leading the charge on the shield generator of Endor!

HAN HAS MANAGED TO RETAIN POPULARITY— AND EVEN GAIN—ADMIRATION AS FANS MATURE.



was churning out darker, less heroic fare. Truly, Han represented a mindset of the time as he plopped into the chair during Luke's first Jedi training lesson aboard the *Millennium Falcon*. Many adults in the audience related more to the wary skeptic who preached that, "Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side," than to the bright-eyed farmboy central to the three-movie arc. What Han's popularity in many polls suggests is that he has managed to retain—and even gain—admiration as fans mature.

Remarkably, Harrison Ford's turn in *Star Wars* follows the same sort of circuitous route of twist and turns as Han's path to heroism. Even though George Lucas had the actor read Han's part with candidates for the roles of Luke and Leia, he initially had no intention of hiring the *American Graffiti* veteran to another one of his movies. Luckily for *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* fans, Lucas later reconsidered that mindset. It is in roles like Indy, Han, President James Marshall in *Air Force One*, and Jack Ryan in *Patriot Games* where Ford's unique ability to act through action sets him apart as a movie star. Take for instance one of his earliest scenes, when Greedo corners Han, intent on picking up a bounty. Many actors could





Clockwise, from far left: Han and Leia: an unlikely couple; Harrison Ford poses for a publicity shot on *The Empire Strikes Back*; searching for Luke on the frozen plains of Hoth.

reproduce the dialogue, but what about the swagger in the way the cornered smuggler props his feet up on the table or rubs his finger on the wall before shooting the overeager Rodian? Who doesn't grin when Han charges a squad of stormtroopers on the Death Star? Or better yet, is there a more perfect set up to the entire detention block escape than Han, after commandeering the control room, babbling over the Imperial intercom?

Han: Uh, everything's under control. Situation normal.

Imperial: What happened?

Han: Uh, we had a slight weapons malfunction, but uh... everything's perfectly all right now. We're fine. We're all fine here now, thank you. How are you?

Imperial: We're sending a squad up.

Han: Uh, uh... negative, negative. We have a reactor leak here now. Give us a few minutes to lock it down. Large leak, very dangerous.

Imperial: Who is this? What's your operating number?

Han: Uh...

While the dialogue is fantastic on its own merits, I bet every *Star Wars* fan who reads it can't help but envision Ford's delivery, right down to that exasperated expression right before he blasts the intercom and mutters, "Boring conversation anyway," then yells, "LUKE, WE'RE GONNA HAVE COMPANY!" Now just try to imagine anyone else making that scene work, and it starts to become clear that Harrison Ford is as important to who the character is in our collective understanding as the story itself.

A STORY WITH HEART

Characters are often analyzed in terms of the archetypal category they fall into. On first blush, the last name Solo, the first appearance in a cantina reminiscent of those seen in old Westerns, and the flick of a credit to the bartender after dispatching Greedo

suggest Han is the cowboy loner made famous in movies such as *Shane*. His affection for and relationship with the *Millennium Falcon* plays into the stereotypical young male of the 1950 and 1960s portrayed on large and small screens.

If I were to map over Han Solo to another iconic character, though, it would be the *Wizard of Oz*'s Tin Man. Like the Tin Man, Han is the second evolutionary character—meaning a character who undergoes change, as opposed to the droids who provide perspective, but experience no true growth—to join the hero's journey. In *The Wizard of Oz*, the Tin Man's personal quest is to find his heart. Over the course of Dorothy's journey through the land of Oz, we learn that although the Tin Man has no literal heart, he most certainly possesses heart in the sense of moral or emotional center.

The parallel for Han Solo is unmistakable. He appears onscreen as a representation of heartlessness—a skeptic without morals, a cynical non-believer, a loner "in it" for himself. Yet



“HAN GOES BACK TO SAVE HIS FRIEND, AND THEREBY REVEALS HIS MORALITY AND THE EXISTENCE AND DESIRES OF HIS HEART.



in one of his few scenes in the third act, Han is the one who tells the hero, “May the Force be with you,” thus giving the cynical audience permission to believe Luke’s path to becoming a Jedi is within the realm of possibility, because no mere mortal could possibly defeat something as all-powerful as the Death Star. Han provides the lens to Luke’s heroic triumph.

The proffered blessing before taking his MacGuffin-like reward and splitting from the rebel base leads into the revelation that makes Han Solo such a relatable character to multiple generations of *Star Wars* fans. While Luke and Leia seek to overthrow the Empire, each arguably motivated in some part to seek retribution for their lost loved ones, Han simply wants to belong, just like every member of Dorothy’s ragtag band in *The Wizard of Oz*. When Han Solo turns around the *Millennium Falcon*, he isn’t going back to save the rebellion any more than the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion intend to save Oz. Han goes back to save his friend, and thereby reveals his morality and the existence and desires of his heart.



Clockwise, from top left: Han, Chewie, and Leia hide out on Hoth; a rare romantic moment with Leia as the heroes flee from the Empire; one of the saga's greatest double acts, Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher on the *Return of the Jedi* set.

STAR WARS WITHOUT “I LOVE YOU,” “I KNOW” IS PERHAPS NOT QUITE THE SAME.

JOURNEY TOWARD SELF

When analyzing heroic arcs following Joseph Campbell's model, the hero is constantly circling toward their true inner self. For a character seeking to belong, this dynamic supports Han's romantic relationship with Leia, as finding a soulmate moves a character toward the path of creating a family. In my deep dive into Leia for *Star Wars Insider* #144, I elaborated on how *The Empire Strikes Back* works as a fairy tale, despite not delivering the happy ending until *Return of the Jedi*. Just as fans accept heroes like Luke Skywalker based upon singular acts of bravery, such as shooting down the Death Star, so, too, can fans take heart in momentary glimpses that validate their belief in a couple that is destined to be together, commonly referred to as “One True Pair” (or OTP) in fandom.

Try to imagine *Star Wars* without “I love you”/“I know” and it's perhaps not *quite* the same. What makes the magical scene into the stuff of legend is that the moment was not scripted, but rather a clever ad lib from the actor himself in consultation with director Irvin Kershner. All the more reason to be grateful Harrison Ford stumbled into the part of playing the franchise's accidental hero. In speaking about *Star Wars*, Ford is always quick to praise the collaborative efforts of everyone involved in the storytelling, but this is one of the rare instances where an actor took a secondary hero and elevated him to a mythic level. For that, fans will always be indebted to the man who gave Han Solo his heart. 🧡

MORE TO SAY

Han Solo returns in
Star Wars: The Force Awakens
on December 18, 2015

Tricia Barr is the co-author of *Ultimate Star Wars*, available now from DK.
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WARRIORS OF THE DEEP!

WORDS: NEIL EDWARDS

WHY IT'S A CLASSIC

Aside from Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and Jar Jar's brief but eventful trip in the bongo sub in *The Phantom Menace*, the underwater world is one environment that had scarcely been touched on. In some ways it was a surprising omission—after all, the area below the waves is almost as much of a mystery as outer space, and just as ripe for being plumbed by the imagination.

We first met Admiral Ackbar and saw some of his fellow Mon Calamari in *Return of the Jedi*, but little was known of his history or where he came from. *Star Wars* Legends stories had their own theories—for example, that he was a former Imperial slave and servant of Grand Moff Tarkin who was freed by the Rebel Alliance and became one of its most celebrated military commanders.

One thing was certain though—given the Mon Calamari's appearance, he was surely amphibious and from an at least partly aquatic planet. This *Clone Wars* storyline finally gave us the chance to explore the oceans of the Mon Calamari homeworld, Dac, and discover more not just about the Mon Calamari, but also their ancestral rivals, the squid-faced Quarren. The fact that the battles in this storyline happen underwater gives them a whole different complexion from other *Star Wars* battles (although we do see that the amphibious Nautolan Jedi Master Kit Fisto is just as accomplished a fighter in water as he is on land). Being underwater adds a whole other element of danger to the battle scenes. Not only is water more difficult to move through, but it has its own perils, too. For the non-aquatic characters,

they could not only be killed by weapons, but could also drown, as Padmé nearly learns when being questioned by the Separatists' shark-like commander, Riff Tamson.

Although Tamson is of course a villain, it's worth noting that the Quarren aren't depicted as out-and-out enemies. Though they have their differences with the Mon Calamari, Quarren leader Nossor Ri objects when the Separatists decide they want to enslave their Mon Calamari prisoners, and when they want to execute the young Mon Calamari leader, Prince Lee-Char.

Ultimately, the Quarren decide to help the Mon Calamari, proving that this isn't just a simple good vs. evil story—the characters' motivations are as fluid as the



environment they live in. Although our sympathies may lie with the Mon Calamari thanks to our familiarity with Ackbar, it's possible that there is some basis to the Quarren's complaints about them. The relationships between different species, and the vagaries of the Clone Wars themselves, are complex and sometimes as unfathomable as the ocean depths.

ESSENTIAL TRIVIA

Ackbar's line in the episode, "It's an attack!" was an intentional homage to his famous line from *Return of the Jedi*, "It's a trap!"

STAR WARS LEGENDS

In *Star Wars* Legends stories, despite being on opposite sides in the Clone Wars, the Mon Calamari and the Quarren both ended up being enslaved by the Galactic Empire. This was despite the fact that Quarren agents had sabotaged the planet's defensive shields to help the Empire defeat the Mon Calamari. Eventually, however, the Quarren joined the Mon Calamari in resisting the Empire.

WHAT THEY SAID

"When I was given 'Water War,' it was really interesting because Ackbar hadn't been seen since *Jedi*. It was all underwater, so we were able to develop water cameras like you might find on a diver or scuba-gear, so all the characters would be moving independent of one another in this liquid space. It was mostly about plotting out those battles. And then of course there was the 'shark,' Riff Tamson. We wanted him as much like a shark as possible. We tried to figure out what his outfit looks like, how big it is, what he does, and so on. I ran that episode for Dave Filoni early and when he saw the first act he just went 'Whoooooa!' when he saw how big it was. He said, 'Just do it. Keep going. This is good. Don't worry about how many assets you have in it.'"

—Duwayne Dunham, "Water War" director, *Star Wars Insider* #133, June 2012

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By the fans, for
the fans!

"THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BLASTER AT YOUR SIDE, KID."



PUBLISHING

THE LATEST FROM THE WORLD OF *STAR WARS* PUBLISHING! WORDS: DAN WALLACE

KNOW IT ALL, YOU WILL

GET SMARTER THAN YODA WITH *STAR WARS: ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW*

There have been *Star Wars* guides and encyclopedias before, but there's never been anything like *Star Wars: Absolutely Everything You Need To Know*. In this book—through lists, infographics, and Q&As—the *Star Wars* galaxy is explored through a style that makes knowledge come to life. The all-ages tome is built around presenting data, in clear, engaging ways, whether it's a chart of the oldest Jedi, a list of all the owners of the *Millennium Falcon*, or a diagram showing the Jedi Yoda has trained. Writers Cole Horton and Adam Bray give credit to the editorial and design team at DK for laying the groundwork.

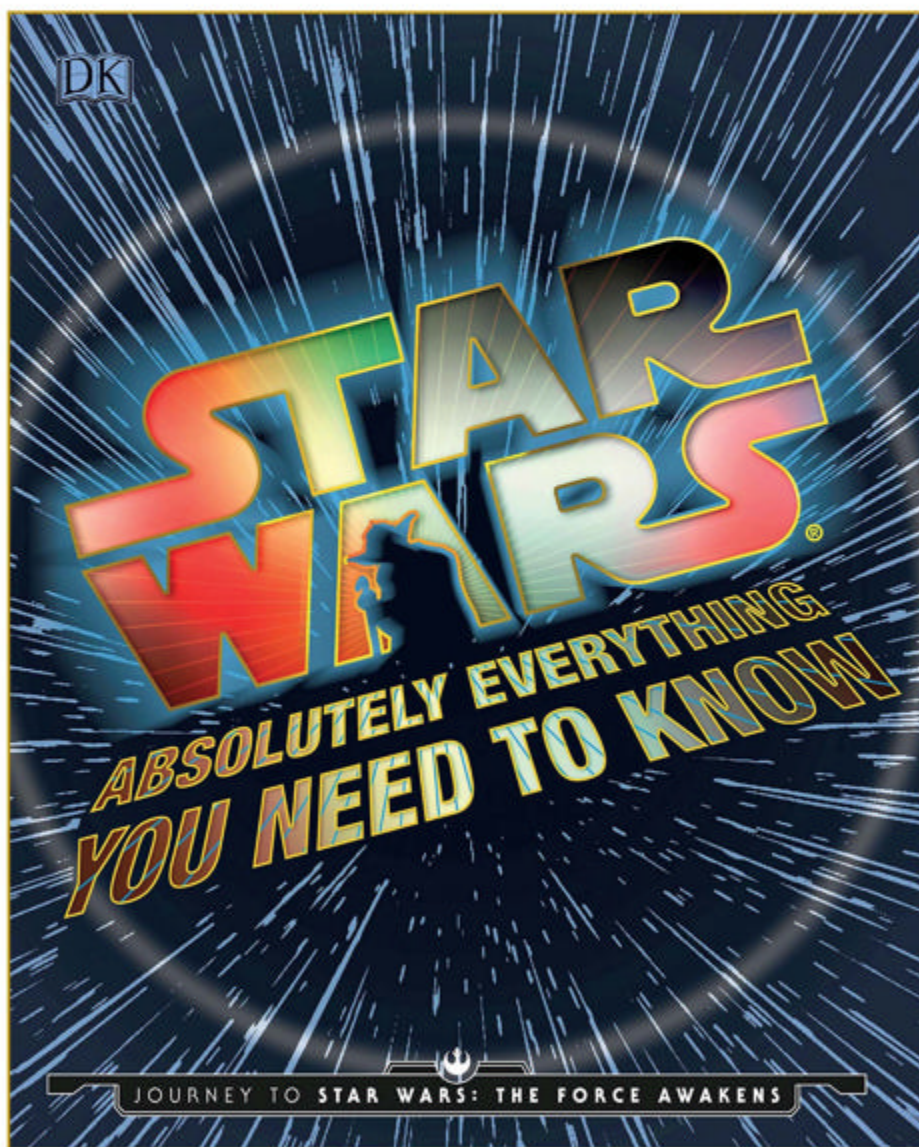
"DK gave us a 'toolkit' to work with, and our job was to find the facts and determine which tool might best convey that data," says Horton. "The infographic style was very helpful when trying to explain the complex stories and relationships found in the saga. The designers had the hardest job on this book since they had to bring it all to life."

Adds Bray, "A lot of time and planning went into that process to make the book both visually interesting and fun. The pages are something your eyes can wander through like a playground, with plenty to explore. The design enhances the relevance and context of the facts, at times conveying extra information itself."

Horton points to the convoluted career of Palpatine during the Clone Wars for a great example of how imagery can convey information. "He's a politician,

a Sith Lord, the Master to Darth Tyranus, he's calling the shots for the Separatists, and later he's the Master of Darth Vader. Those relationships are much easier to convey to readers visually."

The book focuses on the film saga and the animated TV series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* and *Star Wars Rebels*. "I wrote the outline," says Bray, "and my goal was to highlight all of the major characters,



locations and ships, each with their own designated spread. The theme of the book allowed us to diversify from there, so we talk about the countless supporting characters, events, technology and trivia which leads us into a lot of interesting—and often humorous—information. There's so much obscure information in the book that you won't find elsewhere, so readers both young and old will have plenty to surprise them."

Adds Horton, "The book is part of the Journey to *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, program so there will be some exciting new content as well!"

Bray has another reference book—*Ultimate Star Wars*—on shelves now, but he emphasizes that the two projects are very different. "You'll find very little common information between the two. *Ultimate Star Wars* focuses on broader, encyclopedic information that defines each entry, but *Absolutely Everything* highlights anecdotal, quirky and obscure facts."

Those quirky and obscure facts are everywhere, and Horton and Bray each have their favorites. "Droopy McCool, the horn player in Jabba's palace, goes by a stage name," Horton points out. "His real name is a series of whistles, unpronounceable by any other species." Bray says, "We do quite a lot with numbers in this book. I'm a big fan of all things Hutt, so at one point I had a lot of fun counting the number of Sha'rellian toops stacked on top of Mama the Hutt's head."

There's a reason the book is called *Absolutely Everything You Need To Know*—both Horton and Bray think that the book contains essential information for conveying the nature of the *Star Wars* galaxy.

"There are a number of facts, such as C-3PO's six million forms of communication, that give us a sense of just how big the galaxy can be," says Horton. "We have only scratched the surface in exploring and understanding the *Star Wars* universe."

Bray is a student of many real-world foreign languages, and says he wanted to do something special with alien dialects in this book. "There are many great alien languages that have been invented for *Star Wars*, but are rarely explored in-depth within printed material," he says. "We've presented a lot of fun vocabulary from around the galaxy that kids and adults will enjoy learning, and hopefully also enhance their experience watching *Star Wars* in the future."

Star Wars: Absolutely Everything You Need To Know, a 200 page hardcover, is available from September 4.

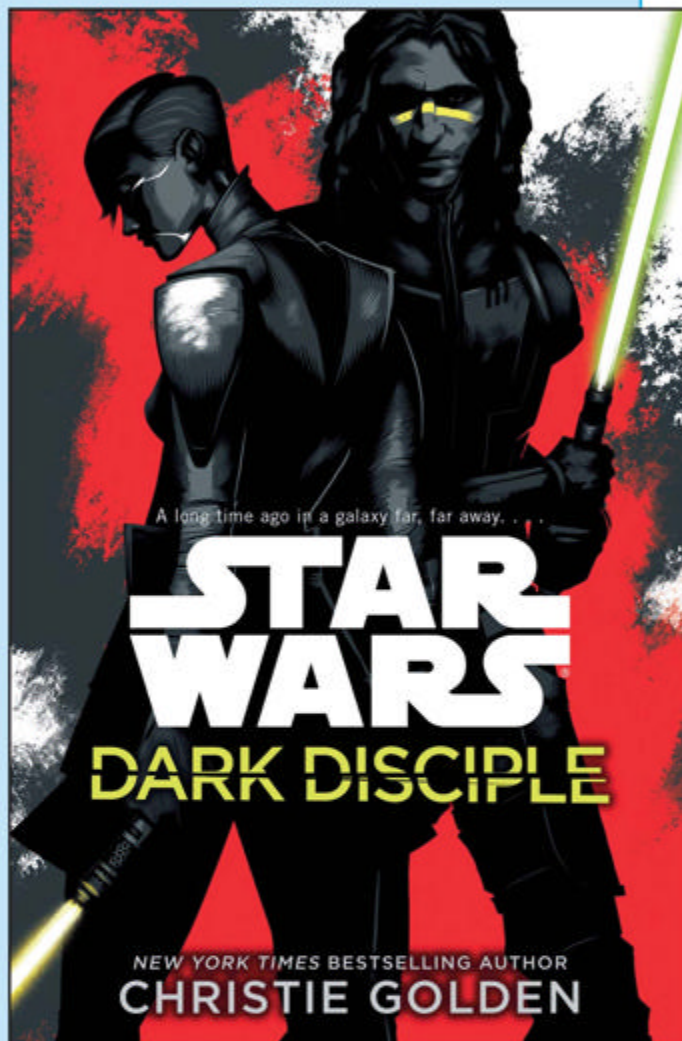
VENTRESS RETURNS

THE STORY OF THE *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS* VILLAIN CONTINUES IN THE NEW NOVEL *DARK DISCIPLE*

Asajj Ventress, Nightsister of Dathomir and former apprentice of Count Dooku, never got the chance to complete her character arc in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. The popular animated series ended its run after six televised seasons, leaving a number of episode scripts still unproduced. One of those lost story arcs is now seeing the light of day as the novel *Star Wars: Dark Disciple* by Christie Golden. When Ventress teams up with boisterous Jedi Quinlan Vos, her mission to bring down Count Dooku is complicated by her feelings for her new partner.

Christie Golden is no stranger to either *Star Wars* or the motivations of so-called villains, having written for the *Star Wars: Fate of the Jedi* saga and having explored the characters of Warcraft baddies through such novels as *World of Warcraft: Rise of the Horde*. This new novel is part of a multimedia initiative known as *Clone Wars* Legacy, which seeks to find outlets for unproduced stories from the series so that fans can enjoy them in other forms.

Dark Disciple is adapted from the scripts for eight episodes of *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, which would have comprised a single, lengthy story arc during the series' seventh season. Because Golden's novel is aimed at adults, she is able to explore moral complexities which might have only been hinted at had they aired within the show itself.



The action starts when the Jedi Council takes drastic action to stop Count Dooku. The latest atrocity committed by the Separatist leader is the massacre of a flotilla of helpless refugees. The Council can't sit by while crimes of this scale go unpunished, and soon the brash Jedi Knight Quinlan Vos is paired up with infamous one-time Sith acolyte Asajj Ventress. The Jedi have no illusions about Ventress and her checkered past, but realize that she hates her former master and will do whatever it takes to succeed in her task.

Ventress and Vos are the best hope for eliminating Dooku, as long as their feelings don't compromise the mission. *Star Wars: Dark Disciple* features a cover by Matt Taylor and is available from July 7.

HELLO, WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

THE GALAXY'S MOST CHARMING ENTREPRENEUR IS BACK IN *STAR WARS: LANDO*

Lando Calrissian is, without a doubt, one of the most interesting figures in the *Star Wars* universe. He's a smuggler, a gambler, a con artist, a businessman, an administrator, and a charmer. When you add in his betrayal-and-redemption character arc, you have a fascinating and complex hero. Plus, he's the only person besides Darth Vader who can pull off the cape look!

Lando fans will be pleased to learn that Marvel doesn't plan to keep them waiting any longer. Coming this July is *Star Wars: Lando*, a five-issue limited series that marks the first time the character—played by Billy Dee Williams in *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, and *Star Wars Rebels*—has headlined a *Star Wars* comic.

Writer Charles Soule (*Death of Wolverine*, *She-Hulk*) joins artist Alex Maleev (*Spider-Woman*, *Moon Knight*) for a tale that takes place before Lando rose to the post of Cloud City's Baron Administrator. Here, a younger Lando tries to get by in the galaxy through a winning mix of confidence, charm, and not a small amount of luck.

Lando has a plan to steal an extremely valuable ship, but is he in over his head? Luckily he has Lobot (and his cyborg headband) in his corner, and Lando is the type to rally from behind whenever the chips are down.

The first issue of *Star Wars: Lando* comes with a miniature galaxy of collectible variant covers. Don't miss variants by artists John Cassaday, Michael Kaluta, Skottie Young, Leinil Yu, and Alex Ross (including an Alex Ross sketch variant), plus a movie photo variant cover and an action figure variant by John Tyler Christopher.



Star Wars: Lando #1 cover art by Alex Maleev

DON'T MISS THE REST OF THE GALACTIC ACTION...

THE
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COMICS!

Star Wars

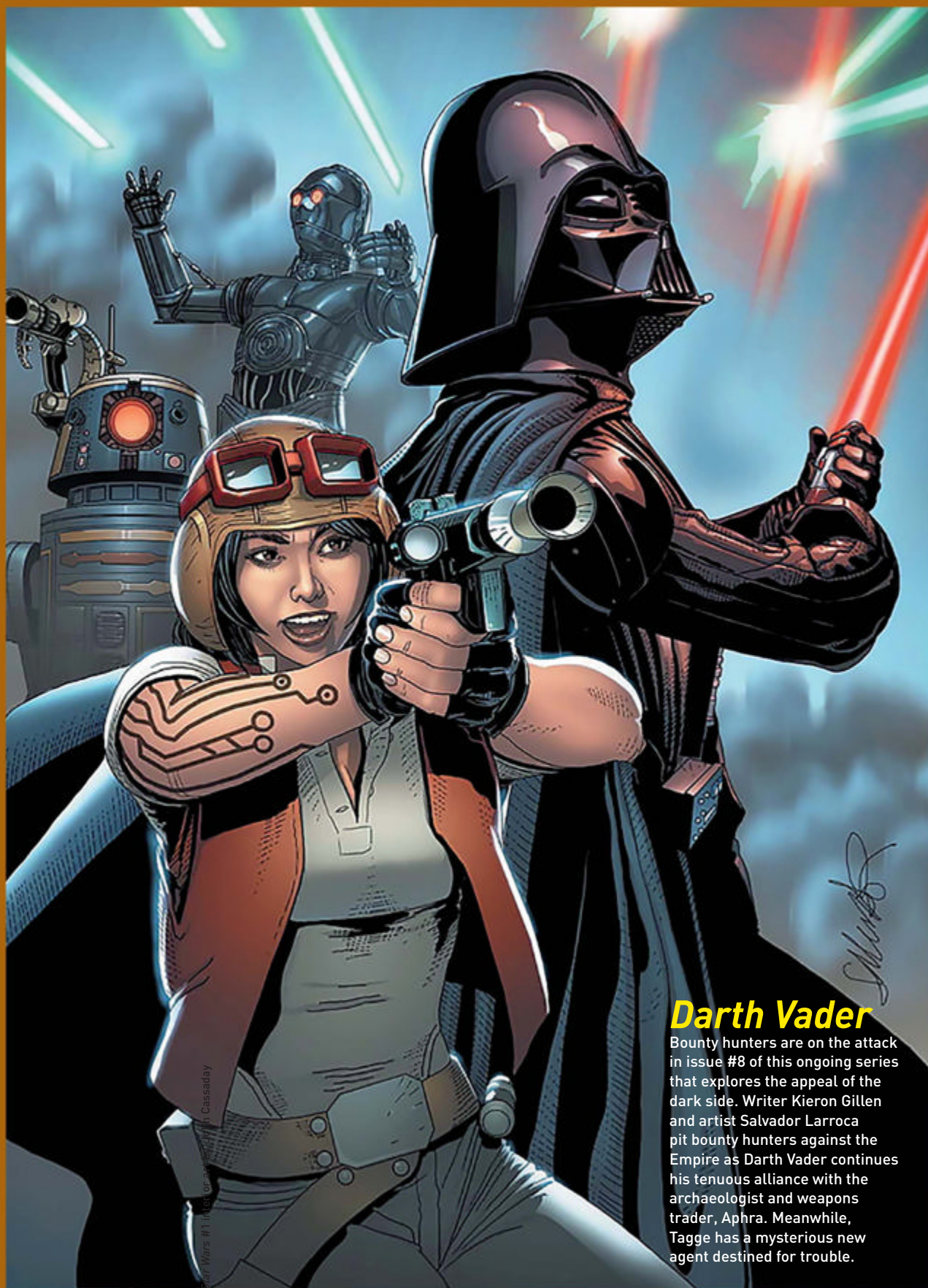
The classic trilogy action keeps on rolling as writer Jason Aaron introduces a few new surprises. Issue #7 is a special one-off story starring Ben Kenobi during his exile on Tatooine. As villainous scum run rampant and injustice reigns, "Old Ben" must ask himself whether revealing himself as a Jedi is worth the risk of exposing Luke Skywalker to the forces of the Empire. Guest artist Simone Bianchi (*Wolverine*, *Astonishing X-Men*) handles the illustrations for this unique tale. Issue #8 of *Star Wars* shifts the focus back to the heroes of the Rebellion, with Han and Leia facing an unexpected foe and Luke continuing his quest to learn everything he can about the Jedi—a path that could lead him to the Jedi Temple on Coruscant! Don't miss the debut of new series artist Stuart Immonen beginning this issue.



Star Wars #7 cover art by Simone Bianchi



Star Wars #8 cover art by Stuart Immonen



Darth Vader

Bounty hunters are on the attack in issue #8 of this ongoing series that explores the appeal of the dark side. Writer Kieron Gillen and artist Salvador Larroca pit bounty hunters against the Empire as Darth Vader continues his tenuous alliance with the archaeologist and weapons trader, Aphra. Meanwhile, Tagge has a mysterious new agent destined for trouble.

Star Wars: Darth Vader #8 cover art by Salvador Larroca



Kanan – The Last Padawan

Writer Greg Weisman and artist Pepe Larraz present a dilemma for the former Jedi (and future *Star Wars Rebels* star) in issue #4. Knowing that the trappings of the Jedi only serve to make him a target in the aftermath of Order 66, Caleb Dume becomes a smuggler—setting up the secret origin of the hero who will become Kanan Jarrus.

Star Wars: Kanan - The Last Padawan #4 cover art by Pepe Larraz



INCOMING

THE LATEST *STAR WARS* GEAR YOU'LL WANT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION! WORDS: JAMES BURNS

GENTLE GIANT //////////////////////////////////////

**MOST
WANTED**

STAR WARS VILLAIN THREE-PACK JUMBO FIGURES

During the late 1970s, in the years following the release of the first *Star Wars* movie, Kenner's action-figure line re-defined the genre and set the pace for collectors for years to come. As part of the line, Kenner released several multipacks, each containing three key figures. Gentle Giant now brings us its newest three-pack: the *Star Wars* Villain Set in vintage inspired packaging.

The *Star Wars* Villain Set includes Darth Vader, a stormtrooper, and a Death Squad commander, each of whom has been digitally scanned from mint 3 3/4" Kenner originals.

Available: Q1 2016

Price: \$199.00



LOGRAY JUMBO FIGURE

The shaman of the Ewok tribe of Endor, Logray, is re-created here with his ornate Churi bird headdress, medicine bag, and walking staff. No details have been missed on this figure, which has been digitally scanned from mint 3 3/4" Kenner originals and reproduced in 12" scale. Logray comes on a vintage-inspired *Return of the Jedi* backing card. Like other jumbo figures from Gentle Giant, Logray ships in a re-sealable plastic outer clamshell to help protect and display this limited-edition figure.

Available: Q1 2016

Price: \$80.00



ZAM WESELL STATUE

Digitally sculpted by the master artisans at Gentle Giant, the Zam Wesell statue features the changeling assassin in her highly detailed costume, holding her sniper rifle and container of Kouhun worms. Zam also includes two interchangeable portraits—one humanoid, and one Clawdite. Crafted using only the highest quality polystone, each limited edition, hand-painted statue comes individually numbered and is packed with a matching certificate of authenticity.

Available: Q1 2016

Price: \$269.00

FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

STAR WARS: IMPERIAL ASSAULT – TWIN SHADOWS EXPANSION

Fantasy Flight Games' *Star Wars: Imperial Assault* miniatures games allow you to embark on brand-new missions set against the backdrop of the Galactic Civil War. Join the adventure in *Twin Shadows*, an expansion for *Star Wars: Imperial Assault*, which adds new missions and new dangers to your campaigns and skirmishes!

Twin Shadows boasts six new campaign missions that invite you to join two new heroes and fight for the Rebel Alliance or flex the might of the Galactic Empire. You can string these missions together to form a mini-campaign, or use them as side missions to enhance a full campaign. Your missions will take you from dusty Tatooine cantinas to the bridge of a Star Destroyer in a battle to decide the future of Tatooine. This expansion also offers plenty of new content for the skirmish game. New figures like the Tusken Raiders and heavy stormtroopers swell your strike force, while command cards open up new tactics for exploration. You'll also find an entirely new skirmish map with two unique



missions challenging you to fight for control of Mos Eisley.

With its new missions, 10 sculpted plastic figures, 12 double-sided map tiles, and a host of new cards, *Twin Shadows* brings the skullduggery and dangers of the Outer Rim to all your games of *Imperial*

Assault, while its story and tactics can be further enhanced by three related ally and villain packs.

Available: Late June 2015

Price: \$39.95

X-WING – IMPERIAL RAIDER EXPANSION PACK

Explore epic new battles in the Galactic Civil War with the *Imperial Raider Expansion Pack* for *X-Wing*! The Empire gains a powerful counter to the rebellion's huge ships with one huge, pre-painted Imperial *Raider*-class corvette and a new TIE Advanced miniature that features an alternate paint scheme. With rules for "energy" to fuel your shields and abilities, plus a maneuver template, your *Raider* will have the feel of a truly enormous ship.

Available: Late

June 2015

Price: \$99.95 each





STAR WARS: IMPERIAL ASSAULT – BOBA FETT VILLAIN PACK AND KAYN SOMOS VILLAIN PACKS

The Boba Fett and Kayn Somos Villain Packs for Imperial Assault, each available separately, allow you to embark on thrilling new missions with one of the galaxy's most formidable bounty hunters or a deadly stormtrooper commander.

These packs introduce detailed plastic figures of Boba Fett and Kayn Somos, alongside new maps and command cards for your skirmish games, plus a three-card agenda set for your campaigns that includes a new side mission in which the Imperial player can hunt down the heroes—and flex the Empire's might throughout the galaxy.

Available: Late June 2015

Price: \$9.95 each

OFFICIAL PIX

Official Pix has created an exclusive photograph folder for this year's *Star Wars Weekends* at Walt Disney World. This limited edition exclusive will be available for \$89.99 and limited to just 300 pieces. It features one photo of each of the 15 guests that will be appearing during the five consecutive weekends of the event and is likely to become highly sought after.

Available: Now

Price: \$89.99



STAR WARS: IMPERIAL ASSAULT – R2-D2 AND C-3PO ALLY PACK

Two of the galaxy's pluckiest and most remarkable droids come to life in the R2-D2 and C-3PO Ally Pack. From the earliest days of the rebellion, R2-D2 and C-3PO have been at the heart of the galaxy's most dramatic events, and this pack ensures that you can take advantage of their unique talents in all your most dramatic games, whether you're playing through a campaign or battling your friends in a skirmish.

Available: Late June 2015

Price: \$12.95



SANTA CRUZ

Santa Cruz Skateboards has a great new wave of exclusive *Star Wars* decks and cruisers. Each board features a classic scene from the original trilogy including the *Millennium Falcon* in flight, the heroes trapped in the trash compactor, and the battle over the Sarlacc pit. The Vader Neptune board is a parody of the classic Jason Jessee Neptune graphic, which is one of Santa Cruz's most sought after decks from one of skateboarding's most iconic professionals—available in either natural or black stain.

Each of these incredibly detailed and unique decks is laser serial numbered with matching numbered Certificates of Authenticity and encased in its own custom foil-printed and embossed, foam-lined display box—a must have for both *Star Wars* and Santa Cruz Skateboards collectors.

Available: Now

Price: Vader Neptune Board in Black or Natural \$79.95 each; *Millennium Falcon*, Trash Compactor and Sarlacc Pit \$134.95 each



SIDESHOW COLLECTIBLES

The new Darth Vader Premium Format Figure from Sideshow Collectibles features a light-up crimson-bladed lightsaber. Every detail of the Sith Lord's costume, from his iconic helmet to his sweeping black cape, has been faithfully re-created to match his look as seen in *Return of the Jedi*.

Available: Q2 2016

Price: \$499.99



BOUNTY HUNTERS



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BOUNTY WINNER!

THE SCOUNDREL AND THE JEDI

I managed to bump into a smuggler I think we're all familiar with—the one and only Harrison Ford—at a charity dinner in November 2014. I also met a former Jedi Knight, Liam Neeson, at a movie awards event! And just recently, the ever-cool Samuel L. Jackson has been shooting a movie in my hometown of Blackpool in northern England!

—Dave Simon, Blackpool, England



Dave and *Star Wars Insider* cover star Harrison Ford!



Dave meets a Jedi with a specific set of skills—Liam Neeson!



From Coruscant to Blackpool! Samuel L. Jackson meets Dave!

I LIKE LUKE!

I got this great pic of Mark Hamill and myself at Celebration Anaheim! There are so many great memories and high points to the convention, but meeting a real Jedi Master was a definite highlight! It's such an exciting time to be a *Star Wars* fan!—Eric Moore, Pennsylvania, USA



Eric is overjoyed to meet Luke Skywalker himself, Mark Hamill!

THE SITH, THE REBEL, AND THE DROID!

My daughter, Tiana, is three years old and attended Fan Expo Vancouver with me recently. She got a lot of lovely comments from fellow fans praising her *Star Wars Rebels* T-shirt.

Unfortunately the line to meet Carrie Fisher was too long for a toddler to handle, but we did get to meet other *Star Wars* folk: the volunteers of the 501st and Rebel Legions, who were in full force and were fantastic with the kids.

Chewbacca showed up and Tiana lit up and pointed him out to me. She knows me too well, and knew I'd be excited to see him! She wasn't scared at all. The best picture though came when she sat herself down next to a scout trooper!

Back in 2014 we met Darth Maul himself, Ray Park, and Steve Blum, who voices Zeb in *Rebels*! I couldn't resist taking a picture of Tiana with R2-D2!

—Chris Hamilton, Vancouver, Canada



Tiana says "hi!" to a friendly scout trooper.



"Can I keep him, daddy?" Tiana and her dad meet Chewie!



R2-D2 and his new pal, Tiana!



The not-so-scary Ray Park aka the very scary Darth Maul!

CALLING ALL BOUNTY HUNTERS!

WE WANT THE PHOTOS OF YOUR ENCOUNTERS WITH STAR WARS STARS!

Have you met a *Star Wars* star at Celebration or *Star Wars* Weekends? We want your photos! Please send your photos and you could be rewarded with an amazing Kotobukiya *Star Wars* statue! What have you got to lose? Write in to the address on page 3 with your photos and details of your celebrity encounter!

VOL
91

BANTHA TRACKS

BY THE FANS
FOR THE FANS

FULL THROTTLE FANDOM!

Whew! Catch your breath yet? As I sit down to write this on May 5th (Revenge of the Fifth!), I'm still feeling a bit winded!

First we had an incredible five-day download of all the latest *Star Wars* news in Anaheim, followed by a second hit two weeks later on May 4th, *Star Wars* Day, which, like Celebration, appears to be the biggest one on the books! In the span of just 19 days, we met the main cast and saw a second teaser for *The Force Awakens*, met the director and glimpsed a cryptic teaser for *Star Wars* Anthology: *Rogue One* (boy, that sure beats calling it "Star Wars stand-alone"!), viewed the season two trailer and premiere of *Star Wars Rebels* (a Celebration exclusive!), witnessed the digital bliss of the new *Star Wars* Battlefront, and got our first behind-the-scenes peek at the making of *The Force Awakens* in the pages of the (May 4th) issue of *Vanity Fair*. Most importantly, though, the world was able to witness our amazing community of *Star Wars* fans—their creativity, passion, excitement, and sheer numbers—through the gift of StarWars.com's



Photo by Joel Aron

live-streaming of presentations, activities, and "fan-on-the-street" interviews at Celebration. *Star Wars* Day also revealed the incredible energy of *Star Wars* fandom around the globe, from small community viewing parties in Petaluma, California (my hometown), to an incredible *Star Wars* Day parade in Milan, Italy, complete with a Death Star hot-air balloon! Never has the *Star Wars* community shined so bright, and never have I been so proud to be a *Star Wars* fan.

What I wasn't able to see at Celebration (*The Force Awakens*

prop exhibit!) was more than made up for in the great many fans I managed to meet, including those who have sent kind letters welcoming me to my new role at Lucasfilm. I'm in the fortunate position of having been a fan for many years, doing a job that has enabled me to keep my finger on the pulse of fandom for over a decade—a great place to begin my journey in fan relations but also one that still requires some occasional guidance.

Fortunately, the Lucasfilm family is a pretty tight-knit group, and I'm so grateful to still have my predecessors in fan relations—Mary Franklin and Steve Sansweet—only a phone call away should I need to bend their ears in the months ahead.

For this first column I'd like to share some of the great photos Mary left me in the BanthaTracks@starwars.com inbox as well as selections from the dozens more that have come in since. I'd still really like to see more images of your Celebration and May the Fourth activities and parties, so please send them to us for possible use in the next *Bantha Tracks* column!

Yours in the Force!

Pete Vilmur, *Bantha Tracks* editor

GET IN TRACKS!



Vlastimil Sprta of the Czech Republic sent in this photo of himself and his fellow Rebel Legion: Lion Base members posing for photo-ops with guests at a toy fair in Bratislava. "Hera, Sabine, Zeb, and Kanan were there all day to give stamps to children, to dance, play and enjoy the great event and add to the good mood there."

Bobby (age six) and Thor (age two) Townsend from the San Francisco Bay Area pose with master sculptor Lawrence Noble at Lucasfilm headquarters in the Presidio during a special May the Fourth celebration for employees and special guests. Noble stands next to his work-in-progress Rey from *The Force Awakens* that he was sculpting live.



Beccs Reed from Australia, who goes by "Blondsaurus" in her series of YouTube craft tutorials, sent in this recent *Star Wars* Hair Silhouettes" DIY done in March.



This photo of 501st Legion Cloud City Garrison members Christy Mooney and Jason Ellenburg with a small *Star Wars* fan was taken at a charity event in Klamath Falls, Oregon. "The fan was asking about how sandtroopers communicated with Darth Vader while he was in outer space and was amazed by all the parts of the helmet." (Photo by Marjon McLain)



Carl Cunningham of the R2-D2 Builders Club had this photo of himself snapped with Anthony Daniels and friend Gordon Tarpley (in C-3PO costume), along with his own fabricated R2-D2 at Celebration Anaheim. A second shot reveals a sea of the club's astromechs in front of the club's awesome sandcrawler exhibit.





"Tatooine Girls," submitted by Alex Hamrum, features "a Jawa and a Tusken bounty hunter taking down a rogue droid."





A *Star Wars* parade in Milan, Italy, was staged by members of the 501st Legion for May the Fourth, which is called *Star Wars* Day internationally. The attraction included an illuminated Death Star hot-air balloon suspended in the night sky!



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Any original art, envelope art, comics, illustrations, news, stories, meeting information, or any materials voluntarily submitted become the property of *Bantha Tracks*. No compensation will be given for voluntary submissions, and there is no guarantee of publication. Submissions to *Bantha Tracks* will not be returned. Each submission must include the creator's name, age, contact details, date the work was created, and a statement that the work is original, and created by the person submitting it.

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banthatracks@starwars.com,
 or send your snail mail to:
Bantha Tracks,
 c/o Pete Vilmur,
 P.O. Box 29901,
 San Francisco,
 CA 94129



Jeff Parks sent in photos of his family outing to Celebration Anaheim, including these two new Imperial recruits. "These are my daughters Riley (age three) and Ainsley (age 14). This is Ainsley's fourth Celebration, and Riley's first. Both girls had an awesome time, and so did their proud dad!"

RED FIVE

CHUCK WENDIG'S FIVE FAVORITE STAR WARS SCENES THAT WILL HAUNT ME FOREVER!

CHUCK WENDIG, AUTHOR OF THE HOTLY ANTICIPATED STAR WARS:
AFTERMATH FROM DEL REY, CHOOSES FIVE STAR WARS CHILLERS.



1

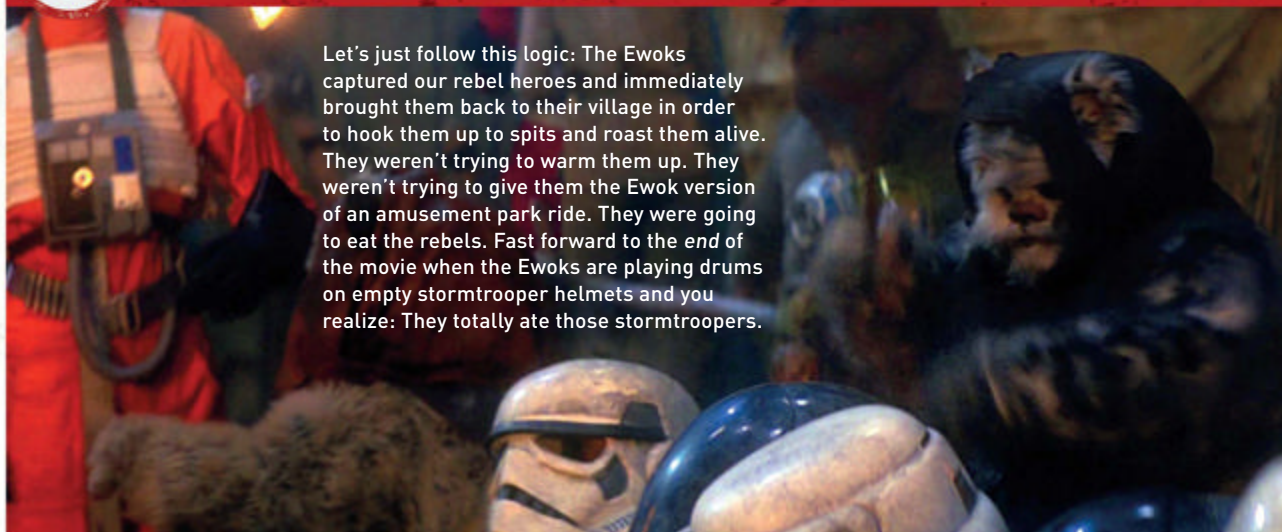
DARTH VADER WITH LUKE'S FACE



I saw *The Empire Strikes Back* at a drive-in theater when I was four years old. I was not prepared for the existential weirdness of having to confront your greatest enemy in a dank, swampy grotto only to lightsaber his head off in order to discover that you are your own greatest enemy. That scene is scary and self-aware, and is powerful at deepening Luke's character—and Vader's, too, in a way. Plus, it makes the Force more than just a benevolent frequency. That whole scene short-circuited my little brain. Actually, it probably explains a lot about me, even now.

2

THE EWOKS TOTALLY ATE THOSE STORMTROOPERS!



Let's just follow this logic: The Ewoks captured our rebel heroes and immediately brought them back to their village in order to hook them up to spits and roast them alive. They weren't trying to warm them up. They weren't trying to give them the Ewok version of an amusement park ride. They were going to eat the rebels. Fast forward to the end of the movie when the Ewoks are playing drums on empty stormtrooper helmets and you realize: They totally ate those stormtroopers.

3

OBI-WAN KENOBI: CANTINA AMPUTATION SPECIALIST



Episode IV has lots of momentarily scary stuff in its lead-up. Darth Vader Force-choking Imperials. Jawas hissing at each other like rats and stealing droids. Tusken Raiders barking while attacking Luke. Then you get to the Cantina (remember: scum, villainy) and to a child's mind, it's not full of aliens, it's full of *monsters*. And one of those monsters, ironically enough, is human: Doctor Cornelius Evazan and his cuddly buddy, Ponda Baba. A pair of killers. (Evazan might even be categorized as a serial killer.) And these killers declare that they don't like Luke and—well, next thing you know—vrrrm, vrrrm!—Obi-Wan is chopping off Baba's arm. And there it is. Bloody like a sack of meat you buy at the grocery store.

4

THAT WAMPA ISN'T CUTE!



I have seen toys of the wampa and many of these toys are adorable. It's a cuddly little kawaii thing. You want to hold it. Hug it to you. It's just a white, horned Chewbacca, you think. But then you flashback to the scene in *The Empire Strikes Back*, and you remember the wampa is a dead-eyed monster. It is bloody from fresh kill. It's got Luke ice-captured in its cave not because it requires a tennis partner, but rather because it is going to eat him. It is going to eat him right up, and Luke's bones will join the rest of the pile. This is not some wise Yeti. This is a monster out of legend, and it hungers for your flesh. (And of course, slaying the wampa and saving himself leads up to another creepy scene: tauntaun guts and the warm emboweling of Luke into that stinky, visceral sleeping bag.)

5

THE ENTIRE THIRD ACT OF REVENGE OF THE SITH



For the first two episodes of *Star Wars*, we are led to believe in the hero/anti-hero of Anakin Skywalker. He goes from cute kid to a crack pilot to impetuous Jedi hero and romancer of Padmé. And then... *whistles* everything starts to go sideways. The whole film tumbles into the dark side as we are granted access to what is the inevitable tragedy of Anakin's downfall. He slays children. He hurts Padmé. He tries to kill Obi-Wan and then is cut into pieces by his old friend (Obi-Wan, bringing his amputation skills out of the Cantina). It's sad and disturbing on a fundamental level and shows the seductiveness of the dark side: Even the best of our heroes can become tainted by it. Of course, this tragedy is necessary to set up the story of Anakin's children, Luke and Leia, but it's definitely a grim, *all seems lost* moment for the galaxy.

MORE TO SAY

Star Wars: Aftermath will be available September 4, 2015, from Del Rey.

HAVE YOU?



Interview by
Mark Newbold
INSIDER 81

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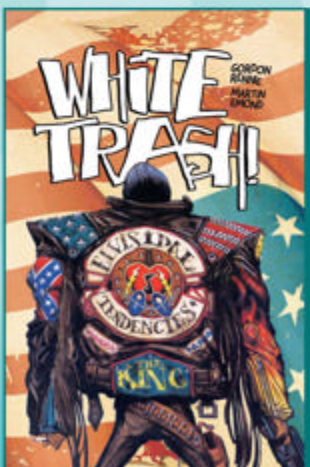
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